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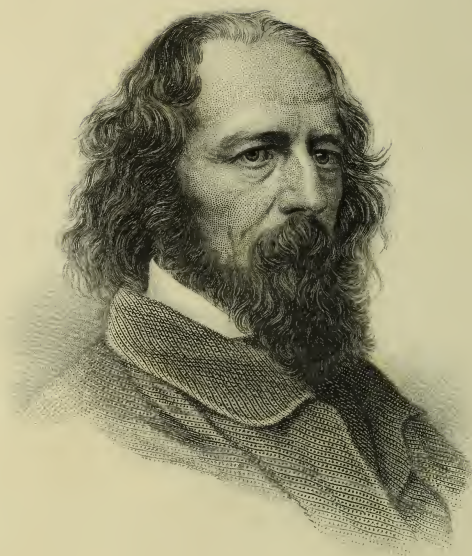
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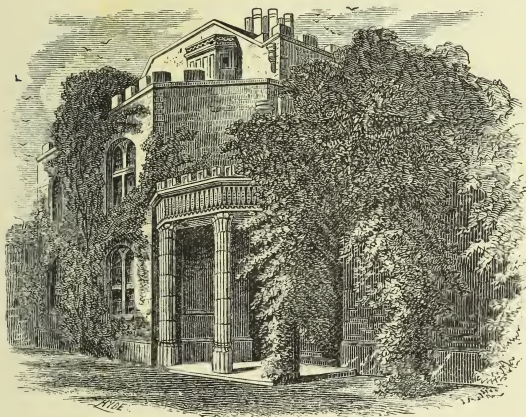


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THE  
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ALFRED TENNYSON.

*AUTHOR'S HOUSEHOLD EDITION.*



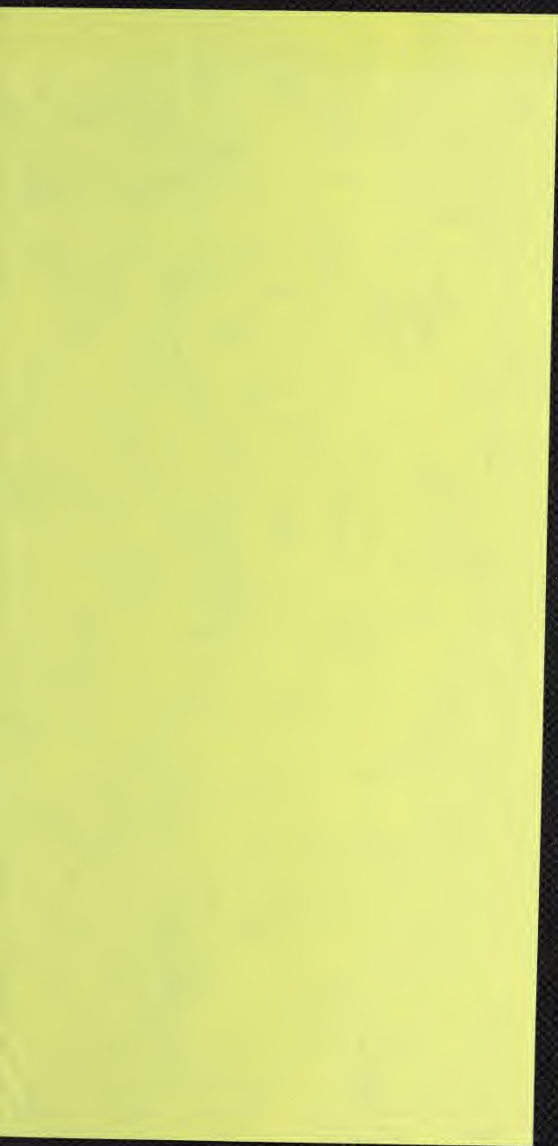
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# POEMS.

(PUBLISHED 1830.)

## TO THE QUEEN.

REVERED, beloved — O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria, — since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;

And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then — while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day !  
May children of our children say,  
"She wrought her people lasting good ;

"Her court was pure ; her life serene ;  
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;

"And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet

"By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea."

MARCH, 1851.

## CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall :  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone :  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone :  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throstle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling rannel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

## LILIAN.

I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Claps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can ;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks  
Pleasant in love-sighs,  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks :

So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
 From beneath her gather'd wimple  
 Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
 Till the lightning laughter dimple  
 The baby-roses in her cheeks;  
 Then away she flies.

## III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian !  
 Gayety without eclipse  
 Wearieth me, May Lilian :  
 Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
 When from crimson-threaded lips  
 Silver-treble laughter trilleth :  
 Prythee weep, May Lilian.

## IV.

Praying all I can,  
 If prayers will not hush thee,  
 Airy Lilian,  
 Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
 Fairy Lilian.

## ISABEL.

## I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over bright,  
 but fed  
 With the clear-pointed flame of chas-  
 tity,  
 Clear, without heat, undying, tended by  
 Pure vestal thoughts in the transluc-  
 ent fane  
 Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,  
 Madonna-wise on either side her  
 head ;  
 Sweet lips whereon perpetually did  
 reign  
 The summer calm of golden charity,  
 Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
 Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
 The stately flower of female fortitude,  
 Of perfect wifehood and pure lowly-  
 head.

## II.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
 And thorough-edged intellect to part  
 Error from crime ; a prudence to  
 withhold ;  
 The laws of marriage character'd in  
 gold  
 Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;  
 A love still burning upward, giving light

To read those laws ; an accent very low  
 In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
 Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
 Right to the heart and brain, tho' un-  
 described,

Winning its way with extreme gen-  
 tleness

Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride ;  
 A courage to endure and to obey ;  
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
 Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

## III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;  
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
 Till in its onward current it absorbs  
 With swifter movement and in purer  
 light  
 The vexed eddies of its wayward  
 brother :  
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
 Clothing the stem, which else had  
 fallen quite,  
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambro-  
 sial orbs  
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each  
 other —  
 Shadow forth thee : — the world hath  
 not another  
 (Tho' all her fairest forms are types of  
 thee,  
 And thou of God in thy great charity)  
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

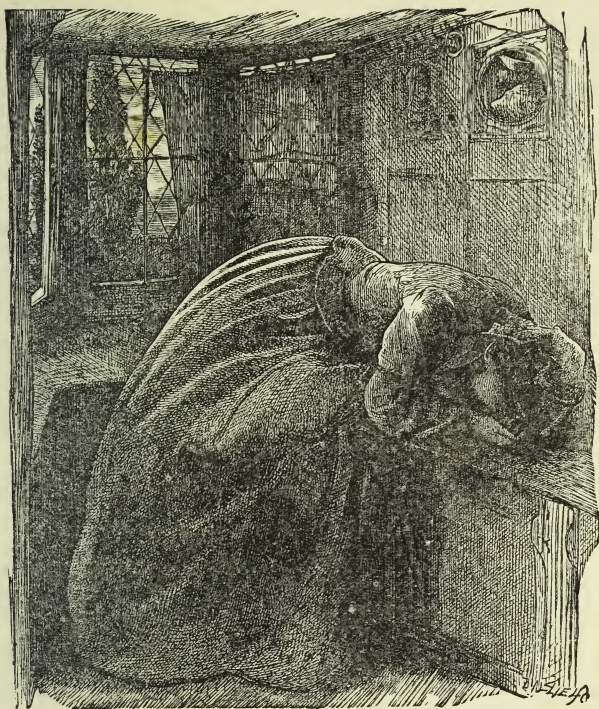
## MARIANA.

"Mariana in the moated grange."  
*Measure for Measure.*

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, "My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !"

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;  
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
 Either at morn or eventide.





" Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried."

After the flitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
She drew her casement-curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
She only said, "The night is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !"

Upon the middle of the night,  
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :  
The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her : without hope of change,  
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed  
morn  
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, "The day is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !"

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding gray.  
She only said, "My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !"

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
 But when the moon was very low,  
 And wild winds bound within their  
     cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow.  
 She only said, "The night is dreary,  
     He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
     I would that I were dead !"

All day within the dreamy house,  
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;  
 The blue fly sung in the pane ; the mouse  
     Behind the mouldering wainscot  
     shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voices called her from without.  
 She only said, "My life is dreary,  
     He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
     I would that I were dead !"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
 The poplar made, did all confound  
 Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour  
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
 Athwart the chambers, and the day  
 Was sloping toward his western bower.  
 Then, said she, "I am very dreary,  
     He will not come," she said ;  
 She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,  
     O God, that I were dead !"

TO ———.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful  
     scorn,  
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
 The knots that tangle human creeds,  
 The wounding cords that bind and  
     strain  
 The heart until it bleeds,  
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine :  
 If aught of prophecy be mine,  
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;  
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :  
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
 Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords  
     Can do away that ancient lie ;  
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
     Until she be an athlete bold,  
 And weary with a finger's touch  
     Those writhed limbs of lightningspeed ;  
 Like that strange angel which of old,  
     Until the breaking of the light,  
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
     Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
 In the dim tract of Penueel.

MADELINE.

I.

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors,  
     No tranced summer calm is thine,  
     Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,  
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
 Delicious spites and darling angers,  
 And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
 Revelings deep and clear are thine  
 Of wealthy smiles : but who may know  
 Whether smile or frown be fleetest ?  
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
     Who may know ?  
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
 Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,  
     Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
     From one another,  
 Each to each is dearest brother ;  
 Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
     Momently shot into each other.  
 All the mystery is thine ;  
 Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
     Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,  
By veering passion fann'd,  
About thee breaks and dances ;  
When I would kiss thy hand,  
The flush of anger'd shame  
O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown :  
But when I turn away,  
Thou, willing me to stay,  
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest ;  
But, looking fixedly the while,  
All my bounding heart entanglest  
In a golden-netted smile ;  
Then in madness and in bliss,  
If my lips should dare to kiss  
Thy taper fingers amorously,  
Again thou blushest angrily ;  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG. — THE OWL.

I.

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round ;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch  
Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay ;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
Which upon the dark afloat,  
So took echo with delight,  
So took echo with delight,  
That her voice untuneful grown,  
Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chant anew ;  
But I cannot mimic it ;  
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free  
In the silken sail of infancy,  
The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
The forward-flowing tide of time ;  
And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
High-walled gardens green and old ;  
True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Amight my shallop, rustling thro'  
The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
The citron-shadows in the blue :  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,  
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
And broider'd sofas on each side :  
In sooth it was a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unnown, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,





"Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold."

Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the  
dome

Of hollow boughs. — A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillets musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-color'd shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge

From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odor in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;  
Not he : but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepres'd,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :  
A sudden splendor from behind

Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
 And, flowing rapidly between  
 Their interspaces, counterchanged  
 The level lake with diamond-plots  
 Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
 Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
 Grew darker from that under-flame :  
 So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
 With silver anchor left afloat,  
 In marvel whence that glory came  
 Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
 In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
 Entranced with that place and time,  
 So worthy of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn —  
 A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
 And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
 Full of the city's stilly sound,  
 And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
 The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
 Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
 Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
 Graven with emblems of the time,  
 In honor of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares  
 From the long alley's latticed shade  
 Emerged, I came upon the great  
 Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
 Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
 Flung inward over spangled floors,  
 Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
 Ran up with golden balustrade,  
 After the fashion of the time,  
 And humor of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
 As with the quintessence of flame,  
 A million tapers flaring bright  
 From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
 The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
 Upon the mooned domes aloof  
 In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
 Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
 Of night new-risen, that marvellous  
 time  
 To celebrate the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
 Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
 Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
 Tressed with redolent ebony,  
 In many a dark delicious curl,  
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;  
 The sweetest lady of the time,  
 Well worthy of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which  
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
 Engarlanded and diaper'd  
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
 With merriment of kingly pride,  
 Sole star of all that place and time,  
 I saw him — in his golden prime,  
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !

## ODE TO MEMORY.

## I.

THOU who stealest fire,  
 From the fountains of the past,  
 To glorify the present ; O, haste,  
 Visit my low desire !  
 Strengthen me, enlighten me !  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## II.

Come not as thou camest of late,  
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
 On the white day ; but robed in soften'd  
 light  
 Of orient state.  
 Whilome thou camest with the morning  
 mist,  
 Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn have  
 kiss'd,  
 When she, as thou,  
 Stays on her floating locks the lovely  
 freight  
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of  
 fruits,  
 Which in wintertide shall star  
 The black earth with brilliance rare.

## III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning  
mist,

And with the evening cloud,  
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my  
open breast

(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest  
wind

Never grow sere,  
When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
Because they are the earliest of the  
year).

Nor was the night thy shroud.  
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken  
rest

Thou leddest by the hand thine infant  
Hope.

The eddying of her garments caught from  
thee

The light of thy great presence ; and the  
cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
Tho' deep not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars which  
tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
Small thought was there of life's distress ;  
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could  
dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and  
beautiful :

Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
Listening the lordly music flowing from  
The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad  
eyes !

Thou comest not with shows of flaunting  
vines

Unto mine inner eye,  
Divinest Memory !

Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall  
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :

Come from the woods that belt the gray  
hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four  
That stand beside my father's door,  
And chiefly from the brook that loves  
To purle o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
In every elbow and turn,

The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland.  
O, hither lead thy feet !

Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled  
folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,  
When the first matin-song hath waken'd  
loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
What time the amber morn  
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung  
cloud.

## V.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
To the young spirit present

When first she is wed ;  
And like a bride of old

In triumph led,  
With music and sweet showers  
Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,  
In setting round thy first experiment  
With royal frame-work of wrought  
gold ;

Needs must thou dearly love thy first  
essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery  
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
Upon the storied walls ;

For the discovery  
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest

Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
With thee unto the love thou bearest  
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
On the prime labor of thine early days :  
No matter what the sketch might be ;  
Whether the high field on the bushless  
Pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge  
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enor-  
mous marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,  
Like emblems of infinity,  
The trenched waters run from sky to  
sky ;

Or a garden bower'd close  
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,



Long alleys falling down to twilight  
 grots,  
 Or opening upon level plots  
 Of crowned lilies, standing near  
 Purple-spiked lavender :  
 Whither in after life retired  
 From brawling storms,  
 From weary wind,  
 With youthful fancy reinspired,  
 We may hold converse with all forms  
 Of the many-sided mind,  
 And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.  
 My friend, with you to live alone,  
 Were how much better than to own  
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !  
 O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG.

## I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :  
     To himself he talks ;  
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
 At his work you may hear him sob and  
     sigh  
     In the walks ;  
     Earthward he boweth the heavy  
     stalks  
 Of the mouldering flowers :  
     Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
     Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
     Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
     Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
 As a sick man's room when he taketh  
     repose  
     An hour before death ;  
 My very heart faints and my whole soul  
     grieves  
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting  
     leaves,  
     And the breath  
     Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
 And the year's last rose.  
     Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
     Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
     Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
     Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## ADELINE.

## I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
 Faintly smiling Adeline,  
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
     Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
     But beyond expression fair  
     With thy floating flaxen hair ;  
 Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
     Take the heart from out my breast.  
 Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

## II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
 Like a lily which the sun  
 Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
 And a rose-bush leans upon,  
 Thou that faintly smilest still,  
 As a Naiad in a well,  
 Looking at the set of day,  
 Or a phantom two hours old  
 Of a maiden past away,  
 Ere the placid lips be cold ?  
 Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline ?

## III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?  
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?  
 For sure thou art not all alone :  
     Do beating hearts of salient springs  
     Keep measure with thine own ?  
     Hast thou heard the butterflies  
     What they say betwixt their wings ?  
     Or in stillest evenings  
 With what voice the violet wooes  
 To his heart the silver dews ?  
     Or when little airs arise,  
     How the merry bluebell rings  
     To the mosses underneath ?  
     Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
     Of the lilies at sunrise ?  
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

## IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
 Some spirit of a crimson rose  
 In love with thee forgets to close  
 His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
 All night long on darkness blind.  
 What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou  
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
     And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

## v.

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
 When thou gazest at the skies ?  
 Doth the low-tongued Orient  
 Wander from the side of the morn,  
     Dripping with Sabæan spice  
 On thy pillow, lowly bent  
     With melodious airs lovelorn,  
 Breathing Light against thy face,  
 While his locks a-drooping twined  
     Round thy neck in subtle ring  
 Make a carcanet of rays,  
     And ye talk together still,  
 In the language wherewith Spring  
     Letters cowslips on the hill ?  
 Hence that look and smile of thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline.

## A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky  
 At night he said, "The wanderings  
 Of this most intricate Universe  
 Teach me the nothingness of things."  
 Yet could not all creation pierce  
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull  
 Saw no divinity in grass,  
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;  
 Then looking as 't were in a glass,  
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,  
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods  
 More purely, when they wish to charm  
 Pallas and Juno sitting by :  
 And with a sweeping of the arm,  
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
 He canvass'd human mysteries,  
 And trod on silk, as if the winds  
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
 And stood aloof from other minds  
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
 Himself unto himself he sold :  
 Upon himself himself did feed :  
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
 And other than his form of creed,  
 With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

## THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
     With golden stars above ;  
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn  
     of scorn,  
     The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good  
     and ill,  
 He saw thro' his own soul.  
 The marvel of the everlasting will,  
     An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he  
     threaded  
 The secretest walks of fame :  
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were  
     headed  
     And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver  
     tongue,  
     And of so fierce a flight,  
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
     Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which  
     bore  
     Them earthward till they lit ;  
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field  
     flower,  
     The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth  
     anew  
     Where'er they fell, behold,  
 Like to the mother plant in semblance,  
     grew  
     A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
     The winged shafts of truth,  
 To throng with stately blooms the breath-  
     ing spring  
     Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with  
     beams,  
     Tho' one did fling the fire.  
 Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many  
     dreams  
     Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the  
     world  
     Like one great garden show'd,

And thro' the wreaths of floating dark  
upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sun-  
rise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning  
eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in  
flame  
WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they  
ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No  
sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his*  
word  
She shook the world.

### THE POET'S MIND.

#### I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit :  
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;  
For thou canst not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river ;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

#### II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;  
All the place is holy ground ;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.

Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.  
In the heart of the garden the merry  
bird chants,  
It would fall to the ground if you came in.  
In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening  
With a low melodious thunder ;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple mountain  
Which stands in the distance yonder :  
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from Heaven  
above,  
And it sings a song of undying love ;  
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,  
You never would hear it ; your ears are  
so dull ;  
So keep where you are : you are foul with  
sin ;  
It would shrink to the earth if you came  
in.

### THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,  
Betwixt the green brink and the run-  
ning foam,  
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms  
prest  
To little harps of gold ; and while they  
mused,  
Whispering to each other half in fear,  
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle  
sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither  
away ? fly no more.  
Whither away from the high green field,  
and the happy blossoming shore ?  
Day and night to the billow the fountain  
calls ;  
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls  
From wandering over the lea :  
Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-hill  
swells  
High over the full-toned sea :  
O hither, come hither and furl your sails,  
Come hither to me and to me :



Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;  
 Here it is only the mew that wails ;  
 We will sing to you all the day :  
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
 For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
 And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
 And the spangle dances in bight and  
 bay,  
 And the rainbow forms and flies on the  
 land  
 Over the islands free ;  
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of  
 the sand ;  
 Hither, come hither and see ;  
 And the rainbow hangs on the poising  
 wave,  
 And sweet is the color of cove and cave,  
 And sweet shall your welcome be :  
 O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
 For merry brides are we :  
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
 sweet words :  
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
 With pleasure and love and jubilee :

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
 When the sharp clear twang of the golden  
 chords  
 Runs up the ridged sea.  
 Who can light on as happy a shore  
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?  
 Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner,  
 mariner, fly no more.

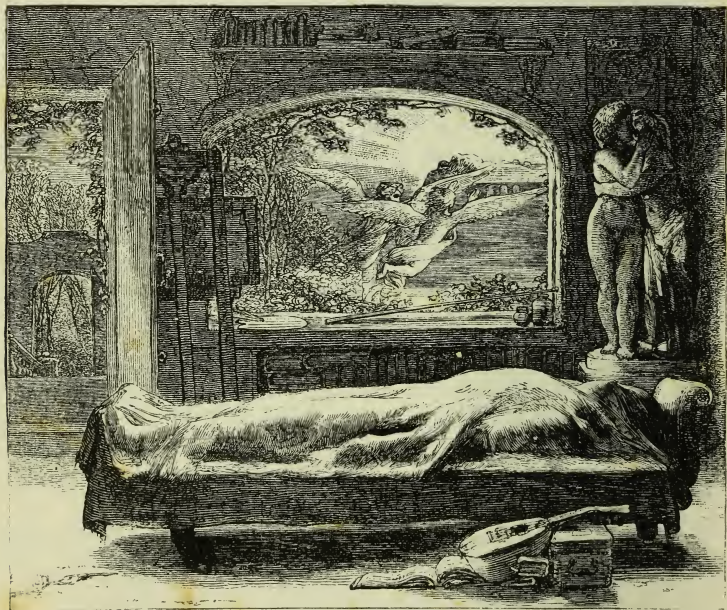
## THE DESERTED HOUSE.

### I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
 Side by side,  
 Leaving door and windows wide :  
 Careless tenants they !

### II.

All within is dark as night :  
 In the windows is no light ;  
 And no murmur at the door,  
 So frequent on its hinge before.



"Life and Thought have gone away  
 Side by side."

## III.

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

## IV.

Come away : no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

## V.

Come away : for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell ;  
But in a city glorious —  
A great and distant city — have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with  
us !

## THE DYING SWAN.

## I.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

## II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows,  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green and  
still  
The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and  
yellow.

## III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear ;  
And floating about the under-sky,

Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole  
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and  
harps of gold,  
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening  
star.

And the creeping mosses and clambering  
weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing  
bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE.

## I.

Now is done thy long day's work ;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
Let them rave.  
Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.  
Let them rave.  
Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;  
Chanteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny ?  
Let them rave.  
Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;  
The woodbine and eglare  
Drip sweeter dew than traitor's tear.  
Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.  
Let them rave.  
These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover.  
Let them rave.  
Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VII.

Wild words wander here and there :  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused :  
But let them rave.  
The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gather-  
ing light  
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes ;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in  
view  
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his  
sight :  
" You must begone," said Death, " these  
walks are mine."  
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for  
flight ;  
Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is  
thine :  
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the  
tree  
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,  
So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall  
fall,  
But I shall reign for ever over all."

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
Oriana.  
There is no rest for me below,  
Oriana.  
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with  
snow,  
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
Oriana,  
Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
Oriana,  
At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana :  
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,  
Oriana ;  
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,  
Oriana,  
Ere I rode into the fight,  
Oriana,  
While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
Oriana :  
She watch'd my crest among them all,  
Oriana :  
She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
Oriana,  
Atween me and the castle wall,  
Oriana.  
The bitter arrow went aside,  
Oriana :  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
Oriana :  
The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,  
Oriana !  
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
Oriana !  
Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,  
Oriana.  
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
Oriana.



Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
    Oriana ;  
But I was down upon my face,  
    Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
    Oriana !  
How could I rise and come away,  
    Oriana ?  
How could I look upon the day ?  
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
    Oriana —  
They should have trod me into clay,  
    Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
    Oriana !  
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
    Oriana !  
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
And then the tears run down my cheek,  
    Oriana :  
What watest thou ? whom dost thou seek,  
    Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,  
    Oriana.  
Thou comest between me and the skies,  
    Oriana.  
I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
    Oriana.  
Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
    Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !  
    Oriana !  
O happy thou that liest low,  
    Oriana !  
All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
    Oriana.  
A weary, weary way I go,  
    Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
    Oriana,  
I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
    Oriana.  
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
    Oriana.  
I hear the roaring of the sea,  
    Oriana.

## CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages  
Playing mad pranks along the heathy  
    leas ;  
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;  
Two lives bound fast in one with golden  
    ease ;  
Two graves grass-green beside a gray  
    church-tower,  
Wash'd with still rains and daisy-  
    blossomed ;  
Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;  
So runs the round of life from hour to  
    hour.

## THE MERMAN.

## I.

WHO would be  
A merman bold,  
Sitting alone,  
Singing alone  
Under the sea,  
With a crown of gold,  
On a throne ?

## II.

I would be a merman bold ;  
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;  
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of  
    power ;  
But at night I would roam abroad and  
    play  
With the mermaids in and out of the  
    rocks,  
Dressing their hair with the white sea-  
    flower ;  
And holding them back by their flowing  
    locks  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
    Laughingly, laughingly ;  
And then we would wander away, away  
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and  
    high,  
Chasing each other merrily.

## III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;  
But the wave would make music above  
    us afar —  
Low thunder and light in the magic  
    night —

Neither moon nor star.  
 We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
 Call to each other and whoop and cry  
     All night, merrily, merrily ;  
 They would pelt me with starry spangles  
     and shells,  
 Laughing and clapping their hands be-  
     tween,  
     All night, merrily, merrily :  
 But I would throw to them back in  
     mine  
 Turkis and agate and almondine :  
 Then leaping out upon them unseen  
 I would kiss them often under the sea,  
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
     Laughingly, laughingly.  
 O, what a happy life were mine  
 Under the hollow-hung ocean green !  
 Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;  
 We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID.

## I.

Who would be  
 A mermaid fair,  
 Singing alone,  
 Combing her hair  
 Under the sea,  
 In a golden curl  
 With a comb of pearl,  
 On a throne ?

## II.

I would be a mermaid fair ;  
 I would sing to myself the whole of the  
     day ;  
 With a comb of pearl I would comb my  
     hair ;  
 And still as I comb'd I would sing and  
     say,  
 "Who is it loves me? who loves not  
     me?"  
 I would comb my hair till my ringlets  
     would fall  
     Low adown, low adown,  
 From under my starry sea-bud crown  
     Low adown and around,  
 And I should look like a fountain of  
     gold  
     Springing alone  
     With a shrill inner sound,  
     Over the throne  
     In the midst of the hall ;

Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
 From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
 Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
 Round the hall where I sate, and look in  
     at the gate  
 With his large calm eyes for the love of me.  
 And all the mermen under the sea  
 Would feel their immortality  
 Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III.

But at night I would wander away, away,  
     I would fling on each side my low-  
     flowing locks,  
 And lightly vault from the throne and  
     play  
     With the mermen in and out of the  
     rocks ;  
 We would run to and fro, and hide and  
     seek,  
     On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson  
     shells,  
     Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.  
 But if any came near I would call, and  
     shriek,  
 And adown the steep like a wave I would  
     leap  
     From the diamond-ledges that jut from  
     the dells ;  
 For I would not be kiss'd by all who would  
     list,  
 Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;  
 They would sue me, and woo me, and  
     flatter me,  
 In the purple twilights under the sea ;  
 But the king of them all would carry me,  
 Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
 In the branching jaspers under the sea ;  
 Then all the dry pied things that be  
 In the hueless mosses under the sea  
 Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
 All looking up for the love of me.  
 And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
 All things that are forked, and horned,  
     and soft  
 Would lean out from the hollow sphere  
     of the sea,  
 All looking down for the love of me.

## SONNET TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou  
     wilt be  
 A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
 To scare church-harpies from the master's  
     feast ;

<p>Our dusted velvets have much need of thee :</p> <p>Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws, Distill'd from some worm - canker'd homily ;</p> <p>But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy To embattail and to wall about thy cause With iron-worded proof, hating to hark</p>	<p>The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.</p>
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## P O E M S .

(PUBLISHED 1832.)

[This division of this volume was published in the winter of 1832. Some of the poems have been considerably altered. Others have been added, which, with one exception, were written in 1833.]

### THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

#### PART I.

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
    To many-tower'd Camelot ;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
    The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses ; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
    Skimming down to Camelot :  
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?  
Or at the casement seen her stand ?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
    The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,

Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,  
    Down to tower'd Camelot :  
And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers "'T is the fairy  
    Lady of Shalott."

#### PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colors gay.  
She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay  
    To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,  
    The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,  
Shadows of the world appear.  
There she sees the highway near  
    Winding down to Camelot :  
There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village-churls,  
And the red cloaks of market-girls,  
    Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
    Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;  
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue

The knights come riding two and two :  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights,  
     And music, went to Camelot :  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed ;  
 "I am half sick of shadows," said  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
     Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
 To a lady in his shield,  
 That sparkled on the yellow field,  
     Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
 Like to some branch of stars we see  
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
 The bridle bells rang merrily  
     As he rode down to Camelot :  
 And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
 A mighty silver bugle hung,  
 And as he rode his armor rung,  
     Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
 The helmet and the helmet-feather  
 Burned like one burning flame together,  
     As he rode down to Camelot.  
 As often thro' the purple night,  
 Below the starry clusters bright,  
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
     Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;  
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;  
 From underneath his helmet flow'd  
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
     As he rode down to Camelot.  
 From the bank and from the river  
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
 "Tirra lirra," by the river  
     Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
 She made three paces thro' the room,

She saw the water-lily bloom,  
 She saw the helmet and the plume,  
     She look'd down to Camelot.  
 Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
 The mirror crack'd from side to side ;  
 "The curse is come upon me," cried  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
 The pale yellow woods were waning,  
 The broad stream in his banks complain-  
     ing,  
 Heavily the low sky raining  
     Over tower'd Camelot ;  
 Down she came and found a boat  
 Beneath a willow left afloat,  
 And round about the prow she wrote  
     *The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse —  
 Like some bold seër in a trance,  
 Seeing all his own mischance —  
 With a glassy countenance  
     Did she look to Camelot.  
 And at the closing of the day  
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;  
 The broad stream bore her far away,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
 That loosely flew to left and right —  
 The leaves upon her falling light —  
 Thro' the noises of the night  
     She floated down to Camelot :  
 And as the boat-head wound along  
 The willowy hills and fields among,  
 They heard her singing her last song,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
 Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
 And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
     Turn'd to tower'd Camelot ;  
 For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
 The first house by the water-side,  
 Singing in her song she died,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
 By garden-wall and gallery,  
 A gleaming shape she floated by,  
 Dead-pale between the houses high,  
     Silent into Camelot.  
 Out upon the wharfs they came,





“ ‘The curse is come upon me,’ cried  
The Lady of Shalott.”

Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, “She has a lovely face;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
The Lady of Shalott.”

# MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

With one black shadow at its feet,  
The house thro' all the level shines,

Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
And silent in its dusty vines:  
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
An empty river-bed before,  
And shallows on a distant shore,  
In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
But “Ave Mary,” made she moan,  
And “Ave Mary,” night and morn,  
And “Ah,” she sang, “to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love for-  
lorn.”

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
From brow and bosom slowly down  
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
To left and right, and made appear,  
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
Her melancholy eyes divine,  
The home of woe without a tear.

And "Ave Mary," was her moan,  
 "Madonna, sad is night and  
 morn";  
 And "Ah," shesang, "to be all alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love for-  
 lorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
 Low on her knees herself she cast,  
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she;  
 Complaining, "Mother, give me grace  
 To help me of my weary load."  
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
 The clear perfection of her face.

"Is this the form," she made her  
 moan,  
 "That won his praises night and  
 morn?"

And "Ah," she said, "but I wake  
 alone,  
 I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
 Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
 But day increased from heat to heat,  
 On stony drought and steaming salt;  
 Till now at noon she slept again,  
 And seem'd knee-deep in mountain  
 grass,

And heard her native breezes pass,  
 And runlets babbling down the glen.  
 She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
 And murmuring, as at night and  
 morn,  
 She thought, "My spirit is here  
 alone,  
 Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:  
 She felt he was and was not there.  
 She woke: the babble of the stream  
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
 Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
 The river-bed was dusty-white;  
 And all the furnace of the light  
 Struck up against the blinding wall.  
 She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
 More inward than at night or morn,  
 "Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
 Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
 For "Love," they said, "must needs be  
 true,  
 To what is loveliest upon earth."  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,

To look at her with slight, and say,  
 "But now thy beauty flows away,  
 So be alone for evermore."  
 "O cruel heart," she changed her  
 tone,  
 "And cruel love, whose end is  
 scorn,  
 Is this the end to be left alone,  
 To live forgotten, and die forlorn!"

But sometimes in the falling day  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look into her eyes and say,  
 "But thou shalt be alone no more."  
 And flaming downward over all  
 From heat to heat the day decreased,  
 And slowly rounded to the east  
 The one black shadow from the wall.  
 "The day to night," she made her  
 moan,  
 "The day to night, the night to  
 morn,  
 And day and night I am left alone  
 To live forgotten, and love for-  
 lorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
 There came a sound as of the sea;  
 Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
 And lean'd upon the balcony.  
 There all in spaces rosy-bright  
 Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
 And deepening thro' the silent spheres,  
 Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
 And weeping then she made her  
 moan,  
 "The night comes on that knows  
 not morn,  
 When I shall cease to be all alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love for-  
 lorn."

## ELEÄNORE.

### I.

THY dark eyes open'd not,  
 Nor first reveal'd themselves to English  
 air,  
 For there is nothing here,  
 Which, from the outward to the inward  
 brought,  
 Moulded thy baby thought.  
 Far off from human neighborhood,  
 Thou wert born, on a summer morn,  
 A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
 Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd



With breezes from our oaken glades,  
 But thou wert nursed in some delicious  
     land  
 Of lavish lights, and floating shades :  
 And flattering thy childish thought  
 The oriental fairy brought,  
     At the moment of thy birth,  
 From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
 And the hearts of purple hills,  
     And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,  
     The choicest wealth of all the earth,  
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
 Thro' half-open lattices  
 Coming in the scented breeze,  
     Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
     With whitest honey in fairy gar-  
     dens cull'd —  
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
 With the hum of swarming bees  
     Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

## III.

Who may minister to thee ?  
 Summer herself should minister  
     To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
     On golden salvers, or it may be,  
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and  
     blinded  
     With many a deep-hued bell-like  
     flower  
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
     Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
     And the crag that fronts the Even,  
     All along the shadowy shore,  
 Crimsoned over an inland mere,  
     Eleänore !

## IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
     How may measured words adore  
     The full-flowing harmony  
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
     Eleänore ?  
     The luxuriant symmetry  
 Of thy floating gracefulness,  
     Eleänore ?  
     Every turn and glance of thine,  
     Every lineament divine,  
     Eleänore,

And the steady sunset glow,  
 That stays upon thee ? For in thee  
     Is nothing sudden, nothing  
     single ;  
 Like two streams of incense free  
     From one censer, in one  
     shrine,  
     Thought and motion mingle,  
 Mingle ever. Motions flow  
 To one another, even as tho'  
 They were modulated so  
     To an unheard melody,  
     Which lives about thee, and as sweep  
     Of richest pauses, evermore  
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep ;  
 Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

## V.

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;  
     I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
 Daily and hourly, more and more.  
 I muse, as in a trance, the while  
     Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er  
     The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
 Float on to me. I would I were  
     So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
 To stand apart, and to adore,  
 Gazing on thee for evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore !

## VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity  
 Gazing, I seem to see  
 Thought folded over thought, smiling  
     asleep,  
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,  
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
 But am as nothing in its light :  
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
 Should slowly round his orb, and slowly  
     grow  
 To a full face, there like a sun remain  
 Fix'd — then as slowly fade again,  
     And draw itself to what it was before ;  
     So full, so deep, so slow,  
     Thought seems to come and go  
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

## VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
     Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,  
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
 Grow golden all about the sky ;

In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
 Losing his fire and active might

In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
 And luxury of contemplation :  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
 Rolling slide, and lying still  
 Shadow forth the banks at will :  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
 Pressing up against the land,  
 With motions of the outer sea :  
 And the self-same influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee,  
 And so would languish evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

## VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses  
 unconfined,  
 While the amorous, odorous wind  
 Breathes low between the sunset and  
 the moon ;  
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined ;  
 I watch thy grace ; and in its place  
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
 While I muse upon thy face ;  
 And a languid fire creeps  
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon  
 From thy rose-red lips MY name  
 Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,  
 With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
 I lose my color, I lose my breath,  
 I drink the cup of a costly death,  
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of  
 warmest life.  
 I die with my delight, before  
 I hear what I would hear from  
 thee ;  
 Yet tell my name again to me,  
 I *would* be dying evermore,  
 So dying ever, Eleänore.

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
 His double chin, his portly size,  
 And who that knew him could forget  
 The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?

The slow wise smile that, round about  
 His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
 Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
 And full of dealings with the world ?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
 Three fingers round the old silvercup—  
 I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
 At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
 With summer lightnings of a soul  
 So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
 So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
 His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :  
 My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
 There's somewhat in this world amiss  
 Shall be unriddled by and by.  
 There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
 But more is taken quite away.  
 Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
 That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth ?  
 I least should breathe a thought of pain.  
 Would God renew me from my birth  
 I'd almost live my life again.  
 So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
 And once again to woo thee mine—  
 It seems in after-dinner talk  
 Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
 Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
 Where this old mansion mounted high  
 Looks down upon the village spire :  
 For even here, where I and you  
 Have lived and loved alone so long,  
 Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
 By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
 In firry woodlands making moan ;  
 But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
 I had no motion of my own.  
 For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
 Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—  
 Still hither thither idly sway'd  
 Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
 The milldam rushing down with noise,  
 And see the minnows everywhere  
 In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
 The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
 Below the range of stepping-stones,  
 Or those three chestnuts near, that hung  
 In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
 When after roving in the woods  
 ('T was April then), I came and sat  
 Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
 Were glistening to the breezy blue ;  
 And on the slope, an absent fool,  
 I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
 An echo from a measured strain,  
 Beat time to nothing in my head  
 From some odd corner of the brain.  
 It haunted me, the morning long,  
 With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
 The phantom of a silent song,  
 That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
 I watch'd the little circles die ;  
 They past into the level flood,  
 And there a vision caught my eye ;  
 The reflex of a beauteous form,  
 A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
 As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
 Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,  
 That morning, on the casement-edge  
 A long green box of mignonette,  
 And you were leaning from the ledge :  
 And when I raised my eyes, above  
 They met with two so full and bright—  
 Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,  
 That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
 That I should die an early death :  
 For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
 And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
 My mother thought, What ails the boy ?  
 For I was alter'd, and began  
 To move about the house with joy,  
 And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
 Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
 The sleepy pool above the dam,  
 The pool beneath it never still,  
 The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
 The dark round of the dripping wheel,  
 The very air about the door  
 Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
 When April nights began to blow,  
 And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
 I saw the village lights below ;

I knew your taper far away,  
 And full at heart of trembling hope,  
 From off the wold I came, and lay  
 Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill ;  
 And "by that lamp," I thought, "she  
 sits !"

The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
 Glean'd to the flying moon by fits.  
 "O that I were beside her now !  
 O, will she answer if I call ?  
 O, would she give me vow for vow,  
 Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;  
 And, in the pauses of the wind,  
 Sometimes I heard you sing within ;  
 Sometimes your shadow cross'd the  
 blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,  
 And the long shadow of the chair  
 Flitted across into the night,  
 And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
 The lanes, you know, were white with  
 May,  
 Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
 Flush'd like the coming of the day ;  
 And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,  
 You would, and would not, little one !  
 Although I pleaded tenderly,  
 And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
 To yield consent to my desire :  
 She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
 I might have look'd a little higher ;  
 And I was young—too young to wed :  
 "Yet must I love her for your sake ;  
 Go fetch your Alice here," she said :  
 Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :  
 But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;  
 This dress and that by turns you tried,  
 Too fearful that you should not please.  
 I loved you better for your fears,  
 I knew you could not look but well ;  
 And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,  
 I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
 The doubt my mother would not see ;  
 She spoke at large of many things,  
 And at the last she spoke of me ;

And turning look'd upon your face,  
 As near this door you sat apart,  
 And rose, and, with a silent grace  
 Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song  
 I gave you, Alice, on the day  
 When, arm in arm, we went along,  
 A pensive pair, and you were gay  
 With bridal flowers — that I may seem,  
 As in the nights of old, to lie  
 Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
 While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
 And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
 That I would be the jewel  
 That trembles at her ear :  
 For hid in ringlets day and night,  
 I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
 About her dainty dainty waist,  
 And her heart would beat against me,  
 In sorrow and in rest :  
 And I should know if it beat right,  
 I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
 And all day long to fall and rise  
 Upon her balmy bosom,  
 With her laughter or her sighs,  
 And I would lie so light, so light,  
 I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet ! which true love spells —  
 True love interprets — right alone.  
 His light upon the letter dwells,  
 For all the spirit is his own.  
 So, if I waste words now, in truth  
 You must blame Love. His early rage  
 Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
 And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
 Like mine own life to me thou art,  
 Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
 Do make a garland for the heart :  
 So sing that other song I made,  
 Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
 The day, when in the chestnut shade  
 I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
 Can he pass, and we forget ?

Many suns arise and set.  
 Many a chance the years beget.  
 Love the gift is Love the debt.  
 Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
 Love is made a vague regret.  
 Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
 Idle habit links us yet.  
 What is love ? for we forget :  
 Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True  
 wife,  
 Round my true heart thine arms en-  
 twine ;  
 My other dearer life in life,  
 Look thro' my very soul with thine !  
 Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
 May those kind eyes forever dwell !  
 They have not shed a many tears,  
 Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part  
 Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,  
 The still affection of the heart  
 Became an outward breathing type,  
 That into stillness past again,  
 And left a want unknown before ;  
 Although the loss that brought us pain,  
 That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
 The woven arms, seem but to be  
 Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
 The comfort, I have found in thee :  
 But that God bless thee, dear — who  
 wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind —  
 With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
 With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
 To yon old mill across the wolds ;  
 For look, the sunset, south and north,  
 Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
 And fires your narrow casement glass,  
 Touching the sullen pool below :  
 On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
 Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering might !  
 O sun, that from thy noonday height  
 Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
 Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,



Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and  
blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers :  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :  
I roll'd among the tender flowers :  
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth :  
I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,  
From my swift blood that went and came  
A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly : from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
Before him, striking on my brow.  
In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire  
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce de-  
light,  
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
I *will* possess him or will die.  
I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

ÆNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the  
glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine  
to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand

The lawns and meadow-ledges midway  
down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them  
roars  
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n  
ravine  
In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning : but  
in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round  
her neck  
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
She, leaning on a fragment twined with  
vine,  
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-  
shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the  
upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :  
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the cicada sleeps.  
The purple flowers droop : the golden bee  
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.  
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
And I am all weary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O  
Caves  
That house the cold crown'd snake ! O  
mountain brooks,  
I am the daughter of a River-God,  
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
A cloud that gather'd shape : for it may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :

Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,  
white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the  
cleft :  
Far up the solitary morning smote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-  
dropt eyes  
I sat alone : white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard  
skin  
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny  
hair  
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's :  
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-  
bow brightens  
When the wind blows the foam, and all  
my heart  
Went forth to embrace him coming ere  
he came.

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Hesmiled, and opening out his milk-white  
palm  
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of  
speech  
Came down upon my heart.

“My own Cēnone,  
Beautiful-brow'd Cēnone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind  
ingrav'n  
“For the most fair,” would seem to award  
it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married  
brows.”

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added ‘This was cast upon the board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the  
Gods  
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom  
’t were due :  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common voice,  
Elected umpire, Herē comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the  
cave

Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, un-  
heard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.’

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnight : one silvery  
cloud  
Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower  
they came,  
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded  
bower,  
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower thro’  
and thro’.

“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and  
lean'd  
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
Then first I heard the voice of her, to  
whom  
Coming thro’ Heaven, like a light that  
grows  
Larger and clearer, with one mind the  
Gods  
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue  
Wherewith to embellish state, ‘from  
many a vale  
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed  
with corn,  
Or labor'd mines undrainable of ore.  
Honor,’ she said, ‘and homage, tax and  
toll,  
From many an inland town and haven  
large,  
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing  
citadel  
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.’

“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on and still she spake of  
power,  
‘Which in all action is the end of all ;  
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom — from all neigh-  
bor crowns  
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand



Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon  
from me,  
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to  
thee king-born,  
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men,  
in power,  
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought  
of power  
Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she  
stood  
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed  
spear  
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-  
control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign  
power.  
Yet not for power, (power of herself  
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by  
law,  
Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
And, because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-  
quence.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Again she said : 'I woo thee not with gifts.  
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,  
If gazing on divinity disrobed  
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
Unbiass'd by self-profit, O, rest thee sure  
That I shall love thee well and cleave to  
thee,  
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,  
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a  
God's,  
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,  
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown  
will,

Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
Commensure perfect freedom.

"Here she ceased,  
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,  
Give it to Pallas !' but he heard me not,  
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian  
wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her  
deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
And shoulder : from the violets her light  
foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded  
form  
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she  
moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'  
She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight  
for fear :  
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his  
arm,  
And I beheld great Herë's angry eyes,  
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the bower ;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Fairest — why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?  
My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
Eyed like the evening star, with playful  
tail  
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most  
loving is she ?  
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my  
arms  
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips  
prest  
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling  
dew  
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,  
My dark tall pines, that plumed the  
craggy ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between  
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath  
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the  
dark morn

The panther's roar came muffled, while I  
sat

Low in the valley. Never, never more  
Shall lone Enone see the morning mist  
Sweep thro' them; never see them over-  
laid

With narrow moon-litslips of silver cloud,  
Between the loud stream and the trembling  
stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from the  
glens,

Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,  
The Abominable, that uninvited came  
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,  
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
And bred this change; that I might speak  
my mind,

And tell her to her face how much I hate  
Her presence, hated both of Gods and  
men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand  
times,

In this green valley, under this green hill,  
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this  
stone?

Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with  
tears?

O happy tears, and how unlike to these!  
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my  
face?

O happy earth, how canst thou bear my  
weight?

O death, death, death, thou ever-floating  
cloud,

There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:  
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts

Do shape themselves within me, more  
and more,

Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the in-  
most hills,

Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder  
comes

Across me: never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
Walking the cold and starless road of  
Death

Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come  
forth

Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

## THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race:  
She was the fairest in the face:

The wind is blowing in turret and tree  
They were together, and she fell;  
Therefore revenge became me well.

O the Earl was fair to see!

She died: she went to burning flame:  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and  
late,

To win his love I lay in wait:

O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;  
I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head:

O the Earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest:  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret and tree.

I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

TO ———

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,  
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind)  
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,  
Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are  
three sisters  
That doat upon each other, friends to  
man,  
Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall  
be  
Shut out from Love, and on her thresh-  
old lie  
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the common  
earth,  
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the  
tears  
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

### THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as bur-  
nish'd brass  
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and  
round," I said,  
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast  
shade  
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily :  
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
So royal-rich and wide."

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West and  
South and North,  
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there  
ran a row  
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty  
woods,  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the  
sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one  
swell  
Across the mountain stream'd below  
In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall  
gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never  
fail'd,  
And, while day sank or mounted  
higher  
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd  
and traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did  
pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace  
stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and  
blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted  
hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract of  
sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.  
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing  
caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
By herds upon an endless plain,  
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry  
toil.  
In front they bound the sheaves. Be-  
hind  
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones  
and slags,  
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
All barr'd with long white cloud the  
scornful crags,  
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray twi-  
light pour'd  
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep — all things in order  
stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
As fit for every mood of mind,  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was  
there  
Not less than truth design'd.

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
Beneath branch-work of costly sardoniyx  
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;  
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian  
king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.



Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne :  
From one hand droop'd a crocus : one  
hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair  
Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
Not less than life, design'd.

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells  
that swung,  
Mov'd of themselves, with silversound ;  
And with choice paintings of wise men I  
hung  
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and  
mild ;  
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd  
his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and  
stings ;

Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or  
bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man  
declined,  
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great  
bells  
Began to chime. She took her throne :  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colored flame  
Two godlike faces gazed below ;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion  
were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd  
fair  
In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,  
emerald, blue,  
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Mem-  
non, drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful  
mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible  
earth,  
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : "All these  
are mine,  
And let the world have peace or wars,  
'T is one to me." She — when young  
night divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils —  
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
In hollow'd moons of gems,



To mimic heaven ; and clapt her hands  
and cried,

"I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various eyes !  
O shapes and hues that please me well !  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

"O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves  
of swine  
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient  
skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep ;  
And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she prate  
And of the rising from the dead,  
Ashers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate ;  
And at the last she said :

"I take possession of man's mind and  
deed.  
I care not what the sects may brawl.  
I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all."

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she hersolemn mirth,  
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd : so three  
years

She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in his  
ears,

Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she  
turn'd her sight  
The airy hand confusion wrought,

Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite  
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
Fell on her, from which mood was born  
Scorn of herself ; again, from out that mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What ! is not this my place of strength,"  
she said,

"My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones  
were laid  
Since my first memory ?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes ; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears  
of blood,  
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of  
flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she  
came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of  
sand ;

Left on the shore ; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from  
the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had  
curl'd.

"No voice," she shriek'd in that lone  
hall,  
"No voice breaks thro' the stillness of  
this world :  
One deep, deep silence all !"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's  
mouldering sod,  
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,  
 And nothing saw, for her despair,  
 But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
 No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with fear,  
 And ever worse with growing time,  
 And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
 And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
 With blackness as a solid wall,  
 Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
 Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking  
 slow,  
 In doubt and great perplexity,  
 A little before moon-rise hears the low  
 Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound  
 Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
 Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, " I  
 have found  
 A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, " I am on fire within.  
 There comes no murmur of reply.  
 What is it that will take away my sin,  
 And save me lest I die ?"

So when four years were wholly finished,  
 She threw her royal robes away.  
 " Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,  
 " Where I may mourn and pray.

" Yet pull not down my palace towers,  
 that are  
 So lightly, beautifully built :  
 Perchance I may return with others there  
 When I have purged my guilt."

#### LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
 Of me you shall not win renown :  
 You thought to break a country heart  
 For pastime, ere you went to town.  
 At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
 I saw the snare, and I retired :  
 The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
 You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 I know you proud to bear your name,  
 Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
 Too proud to care from whence I came.  
 Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
 A heart that doats on truer charms.

A simple maiden in her flower  
 Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 Some meeker pupil you must find,  
 For were you queen of all that is,  
 I could not stoop to such a mind.  
 You sought to prove how I could love,  
 And my disdain is my reply.  
 The lion on your old stone gates  
 Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 You put strange memories in my head.  
 Not thrice your branching limes have  
 blown  
 Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
 O, your sweet eyes, your low replies :  
 A great enchantress you may be ;  
 But there was that across his throat  
 Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 When thus he met his mother's view,  
 She had the passions of her kind,  
 She spake some certain truths of you.  
 Indeed I heard one bitter word  
 That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
 Her manners had not that repose  
 Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 There stands a spectre in your hall :  
 The guilt of blood is at your door :  
 You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
 You held your course without remorse,  
 To make him trust his modest worth,  
 And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
 And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 From yon blue heavens above us bent  
 The gardener Adam and his wife  
 Smile at the claims of long descent.  
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
 'Tis only noble to be good.  
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 You pine among your halls and towers :  
 The languid light of your proud eyes  
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
 In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
 But sickening of a vague disease,  
 You know so ill to deal with time,  
 You needs must play such pranks as  
 these.



"The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired."

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If Time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands?  
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

### THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call  
me early, mother dear ;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of  
all the glad New-year ;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the  
maddest merriest day ;

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say,  
but none so bright as mine ;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate  
and Caroline :

But none so fair as little Alice in all the  
land they say,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that  
I shall never wake,

If you do not call me loud when the day  
begins to break :

But I must gather knots of flowers, and  
buds and garlands gay,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May.





"You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;  
To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad New-year."

As I came up the valley whom think ye  
should I see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath  
the hazel-tree?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother,  
I gave him yesterday, —  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I  
was all in white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like  
a flash of light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care  
not what they say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that  
can never be:  
They say his heart is breaking, mother —  
what is that to me?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me  
any summer day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow  
to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see  
me made the Queen;  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill  
come from far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has  
wov'n its wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the  
faint sweet cuckoo-flowers ;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like  
fire in swamps and hollows gray,  
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother,  
upon the meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to  
brighten as they pass ;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole  
of the livelong day,  
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and  
green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are  
over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill  
merrily glance and play,  
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call  
me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all  
the glad New-year :  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the  
maddest merriest day,  
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

#### NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you 're waking call me early, call me  
early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the  
glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever  
see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould  
and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and  
left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time,  
and all my peace of mind ;  
And the New-year 's coming up, mother,  
but I shall never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf  
upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers :  
we had a merry day ;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they  
made me Queen of May ;  
And we danced about the may-pole and  
in the hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the  
tall white chimney-tops.

There 's not a flower on all the hills :  
the frost is on the pane :  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops  
come again :  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun  
come out on high :  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy  
tall elm-tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the  
fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again  
with summer o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the  
mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon  
that grave of mine,  
In the early early morning the summer  
sun 'ill shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm  
upon the hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and  
all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother,  
beneath the waning light  
You 'll never see me more in the long  
gray fields at night ;  
When from the dry dark wold the sum-  
mer airs blow cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass,  
and the bulrush in the pool.

You 'll bury me, my mother, just beneath  
the hawthorn shade,  
And you 'll come sometimes and see me  
where I am lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall  
hear you when you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the  
long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you 'll  
forgive me now ;  
You 'll kiss me, my own mother, and  
forgive me ere I go ;



Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let  
your grief be wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you  
have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from  
out my resting-place ;  
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall  
look upon your face ;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall  
harken what you say,  
And be often, often with you when you  
think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have  
said good-night for evermore,  
And you see me carried out from the  
threshold of the door ;  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my  
grave be growing green :  
She'll be a better child to you than  
ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the  
granary floor :  
Let her take 'em : they are hers ; I shall  
never garden more :  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train  
the rose-bush that I set  
About the parlor-window and the box  
of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother : call me be-  
fore the day is born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at  
morn ;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the  
glad New-year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me  
early, mother dear.

## CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet  
alive I am ;  
And in the fields all round I hear the  
bleating of the lamb.  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morn-  
ing of the year !  
To die before the snowdrop came, and  
now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes  
beneath the skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice  
to me that cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and all  
the flowers that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me  
that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to  
leave the blessed sun,  
And now it seems as hard to stay, and  
yet His will be done !  
But still I think it can't be long before  
I find release ;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has  
told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on  
his silver hair !  
And blessings on his whole life long,  
until he meet me there !  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on  
his silver head !  
A thousand times I blest him, as he  
knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he  
show'd me all the sin.  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late,  
there's One will let me in :  
Nor would I now be well, mother, again,  
if that could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that  
died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or  
the death-watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the  
night and morning meet :  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put  
your hand in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will  
tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard  
the angels call ;  
It was when the moon was setting, and  
the dark was over all ;  
The trees began to whisper, and the  
wind began to roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard  
them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you  
and Effie dear ;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no  
longer here ;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both,  
and so I felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music  
on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd  
in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me —  
I know not what was said ;  
For great delight and shuddering took  
hold of all my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music  
on the wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, " It 's  
not for them : it 's mine."  
And if it comes three times, I thought,  
I take it for a sign.  
And once again it came, and close beside  
the window-bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven  
and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust  
it is. I know  
The blessed music went that way my  
soul will have to go.  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go  
to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I  
am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell  
him not to fret ;  
There 's many a worthier than I, would  
make him happy yet.  
If had lived — I cannot tell — I might  
have been his wife ;  
But all these things have ceased to be,  
with my desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the  
heavens are in a glow ;  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all  
of them I know.  
And there I move no longer now, and  
— there his light may shine —  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands  
than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that  
ere this day is done  
The voice, that now is speaking, may be  
beyond the sun —  
For ever and for ever with those just  
souls and true —  
And what is life, that we should moan ?  
why make we such ado ?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed  
home —  
And there to wait a little while till you  
and Effie come —

To lie within the light of God, as I lie  
upon your breast —  
And the wicked cease from troubling,  
and the weary are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS.

" COURAGE ! " he said, and pointed  
toward the land,  
" This mounting wave will roll us shore-  
ward soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land,  
In which it seemed always afternoon.  
All round the coast the languid air did  
swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary  
dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the  
moon ;

And like a downward smoke, the slender  
stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall  
did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward  
smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did  
go ;

And some thro' wavering lights and  
shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward  
flow

From the inner land : far off, three  
mountain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with  
showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the  
woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts  
the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding  
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale ;  
A land where all things always seem'd  
the same !

And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters  
came.



“To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast, —  
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

Branches they bore of that enchanted  
stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they  
gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the  
grave ;  
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart  
did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;  
And sweet it was to dream of Father-land,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but ever-  
more

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, “We will return  
no more” ;  
And all at once they sang, “Our island  
home  
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer  
roam.”

## CHORIC SONG.

### I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between  
walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from  
the blissful skies.  
Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers  
weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy  
hangs in sleep.

### II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from  
weariness ?  
All things have rest : why should we  
toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,

And make perpetual moan,  
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
 Nor ever fold our wings,  
 And cease from wanderings,  
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy  
 balm ;  
 Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
 "There is no joy but calm !"  
 Why should we only toil, the roof and  
 crown of things ?

## III.

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,  
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
 With winds upon the branch, and there  
 Grows green and broad, and takes no  
 care,

Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
 Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
 Falls, and floats adown the air.

Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-  
 mellow,

Drops in a silent autumn night.  
 All its allotted length of days,  
 The flower ripens in its place,  
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no  
 toil,  
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
 Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
 Should life all labor be ?

Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
 Let us alone. What is it that will last ?  
 All things are taken from us, and become  
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
 To war with evil ? Is there any peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?  
 All things have rest, and ripen toward  
 the grave

In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death,  
 or dreamful ease.

## V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward  
 stream,  
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
 Falling asleep in a half-dream !  
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber  
 light,

Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on  
 the height ;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;  
 Eating the Lotos day by day,  
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;  
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
 To the influence of mild-minded melan-  
 choly ;

To muse and brood and live again in  
 memory,

With those old faces of our infancy  
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an  
 urn of brass !

## VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
 And dear the last embraces of our wives  
 And their warm tears : but all hath  
 suffer'd change ;  
 For surely now our household hearths  
 are cold :

Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :  
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble  
 joy.

Or else the island princes over-bold  
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel  
 sings

Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten  
 things.

Is there confusion in the little isle ?

Let what is broken so remain.

The Gods are hard to reconcile :

'T is hard to settle order once again.

There is confusion worse than death,

Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,

Long labor unto aged breath,

Sore task to hearts worn out by many  
 wars

And eyes grown dim with gazing on the  
 pilot-stars.

## VII.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us,  
 blowing lowly)

With half-dropt eyelids still,

Beneath a heaven dark and holy,

To watch the long bright river drawing  
 slowly

His waters from the purple hill —

To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined  
 vine —



To watch the emerald-color'd water falling  
Thro' many a woy'n acanthus-wreath  
divine !

Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling  
brine,

Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out  
beneath the pine.

## VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
All day the wind breathes low with  
mellower tone :

Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the  
yellow Lotus-dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of  
motion we,

Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,  
when the surge was seething free,

Where the wallowing monsterspouted his  
foam-fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with  
an equal mind,

In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie  
reclined

On the hills like Gods together, careless  
of mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the  
bolts are hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the  
clouds are lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with  
the gleaming world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over  
wasted lands,

Blight and famine, plague and earth-  
quake, roaring deeps and fiery  
sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and  
sinking ships, and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred  
in a doleful song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient  
tale of wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning tho' the  
words are strong ;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that  
cleave the soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with  
enduring toil,

Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and  
wine and oil ;

Till they perish and they suffer — some,  
't is whisper'd — down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian  
valleys dwell,

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of  
asphodel.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet  
than toil, the shore

Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind  
and wave and oar ;

O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not  
wander more.

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their  
shade,

"*The Legend of Good Women*," long  
ago

Sung by the morning star of song, who  
made

His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose  
sweet breath

Preluded those melodious bursts,  
that fill

The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
Held me above the subject, as strong  
gales

Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho'  
my heart,

Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In  
every land

I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
Peopled the hollow dark, like burn-  
ing stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and  
wrong,

And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clang-  
ing hoofs :

And I saw crowds in column'd sanc-  
tuaries ;

And forms that pass'd at windows and  
on roofs

Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet



"O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more."

Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;  
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with  
heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues  
of fire ;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and  
masts,  
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen  
plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers  
woes,

Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron  
grates,  
And hushed seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when  
to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-  
same way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level  
sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove  
to speak,

As when a great thought strikes along  
the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing  
thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges,  
and did creep  
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd,  
and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in  
coolest dew  
The maiden splendors of the morning star  
Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood under-  
neath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged  
with clearest green,  
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey  
done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the  
twilight plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine  
turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to  
tree,  
And at the root thro' lush green grasses  
burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I  
knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid  
dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks  
drench'd in dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and  
frame

The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that un-  
blissful clime,

“Pass freely thro' : the wood is all thine  
own,  
Until the end of time.”

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stillier than chisell'd marble, stand-  
ing there ;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with sur-  
prise  
Froze my swift speech : she turning  
on my face

The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

“I had great beauty : ask thou not my  
name :  
No one can be more wise than destiny.  
Many drew swords and died. Where'er  
I came  
I brought calamity.”

“No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field  
Myself for such a face had boldly  
died,”

I answer'd free ; and turning I appeal'd  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks  
averse,  
To her full height her stately stature  
draws ;

“My youth,” she said, “was blasted  
with a curse :  
This woman was the cause.

“I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
Which yet to name, my spirit loathes  
and fears :  
My father held his hand upon his face ;  
I, blinded with my tears,

“Still strove to speak : my voice was  
thick with sighs  
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with  
wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.



"The high masts flicker'd as they lay  
afloat ;  
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and  
the shore ;  
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's  
throat ;  
Touch'd ; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow :  
"I would the white cold heavy-  
plunging foam,  
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep  
below,  
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence  
dear,  
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping  
sea :  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come  
here,  
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf un-  
roll'd ;  
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold  
black eyes,  
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,  
began :  
"I govern'd men by change, and so  
I sway'd  
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen  
a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humorebband flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood :  
That makes my only woe.

"Nay—yet it chafes me that I could  
not bend  
One will ; nor tame and tutor with  
mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee,  
friend,  
Where is Mark Antony ?

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode  
sublime  
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God  
by God :  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.

"We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,  
and lit  
Lamps which outburn'd Canopus.  
O my life  
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from  
war's alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die !

"And there he died : and when I heard  
my name  
Sigh'd forth with life I would not  
brook my fear  
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd his  
fame.  
What else was left ? look here !"

(With that she tore her robe apart, and  
half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to  
sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a  
laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite.)

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier  
found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my  
brows,  
A name for ever !—lying robed and  
crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down  
and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all  
change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for  
delight ;  
Because with sudden motion from  
the ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd  
with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest  
darts ;  
As once they drew into two burning  
rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty  
hearts  
Of captains and of kings.



Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
 A noise of some one coming thro'  
 the lawn,  
 And singing clearer than the crested  
 bird,  
 That claps his wings at dawn.

"The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
 From craggy hollows pouring, late  
 and soon,  
 Sound all night long, in falling thro' the  
 dell,  
 Far-heard beneath the moon.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
 Floods all the deep-blue gloom with  
 beams divine :  
 All night the splinter'd crags that wall  
 the dell  
 With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sunshine  
 laves  
 The lawn by some cathedral, thro'  
 the door  
 Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
 Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd  
 and tied  
 To where he stands, — so stood I,  
 when that flow  
 Of music left the lips of her that died  
 To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
 A maiden pure ; as when she went  
 along  
 From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with wel-  
 come light,  
 With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : "Heaven heads  
 the count of crimes  
 With that wild oath." She render'd  
 answer high :  
 "Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand  
 times  
 I would be born and die.

"Single I grew, like some green plant,  
 whose root  
 Creeps to the garden water-pipes  
 beneath,  
 Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to  
 fruit  
 Changed, I was ripe for death.

"My God, my land, my father — these  
 did move  
 Me from my bliss of life, that Nature  
 gave,  
 Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love  
 Down to a silent grave.

"And I went mourning, 'No fair Hebrew  
 boy  
 Shall smile away my maiden blame  
 among  
 The Hebrew mothers' — emptied of all joy,  
 Leaving the dance and song,

"Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
 Leaving the promise of my bridal-  
 bower,  
 The valleys of grape-loaded vines that  
 glow  
 Beneath the battled tower.

"The light white cloud swam over us.  
 Anon  
 We heard the lion roaring from his  
 den ;  
 We saw the large white stars rise one by  
 one,  
 Or, from the darken'd glen,

"Saw God divide the night with flying  
 flame,  
 And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
 I heard Him, for He spake, and grief  
 became  
 A solemn scorn of ills.

"When the next moon was roll'd into  
 the sky,  
 Strength came to me that equal'd  
 my desire.  
 How beautiful a thing it was to die  
 For God and for my sire !

"It comforts me in this one thought to  
 dwell,  
 That I subdued me to my father's  
 will ;  
 Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
 Sweetens the spirit still.

"Moreover it is written that my race  
 Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from  
 Aroer  
 On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her face  
 Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips : she left me where  
I stood :  
"Glory to God," she sang, and past  
afar,

Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans  
his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing sud-  
denly,  
And the old year is dead.

"Alas ! alas !" a low voice, full of care,  
Murmur'd beside me : "Turn and  
look on me :

I am that Rosamond, whom men call  
fair,  
If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse  
and poor !  
O me, that I should ever see the  
light !

Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and  
trust :

To whom the Egyptian : "O, you  
tamely died !

You should have clung to Fulvia's waist,  
and thrust

The dagger thro' her side."

With that sharp sound the white dawn's  
creeping beams,

Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the  
mystery

Of folded sleep. The captain of my  
dreams

Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the  
dark,

Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her  
last trance

Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of  
Arc,

A light of ancient France ;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish  
Death,

Who kneeling, with one arm about  
her king,

Drew forth the poison with her balmy  
breath,  
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the  
hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I from  
sleep  
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what  
dull pain

Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to  
strike

Into that wondrous track of dreams again !  
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been  
blest,

Desiring what is mingled with past  
years,

In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By signs or groans or tears ;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest  
art,

Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

## MARGARET.

### I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,

O rare pale Margaret,

What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower ?

Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,

Your melancholy sweet and frail

As perfume of the cuckoo-flower ?

From the westward-winding flood,

From the evening-lighted wood,

From all things outward you have  
won

A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
Between the rainbow and the sun.

The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,

Encircles all the heart, and feedeth

The senses with a still delight

Of dainty sorrow without sound,

Like the tender amber round,

Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

## II.

You love, remaining peacefully,  
 To hear the murmur of the strife,  
 But enter not the toil of life.  
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
 You are the evening star, always  
 Remaining betwixt dark and bright :  
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
 Float by you on the verge of night.

## III.

What can it matter, Margaret,  
 What songs below the waning stars  
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
 Sang looking thro' his prison bars ?  
 Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
 Just ere the falling axe did part  
 The burning brain from the true  
 heart,  
 Even in her sight he loved so well ?

## IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made  
 And gave you on your natal day.  
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
 Keeps real sorrow far away.  
 You move not in such solitudes,  
 You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
 And less aërially blue,  
 But ever trembling thro' the dew  
 Of dainty-woful sympathies.

## V.

O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 Come down, come down, and hear me  
 speak :  
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :  
 The sun is just about to set,  
 The arching limes are tall and shady,  
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
 Moving in the leavy beech.  
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
 Where all day long you sit between  
 Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
 Or only look across the lawn,  
 Look out below your bower-eaves,  
 Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

## THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :  
 While all the neighbors shoot thee  
 round,  
 I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
 Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
 Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :  
 The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
 All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
 Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
 With that cold dagger of thy bill  
 To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,  
 Cold February loved, is dry :  
 Plenty corrupts the melody  
 That made thee famous once, when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
 Now thy flute-notes are changed to  
 coarse,  
 I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
 As when a hawkers hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
 While you sun prospers in the blue,  
 Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
 Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

## THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
 And the winter winds are wearily sighing :  
 Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
 And tread softly and speak low,  
 For the old year lies a-dying.  
 Old year, you must not die ;  
 You came to us so readily,  
 You lived with us so steadily,  
 Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
 He will not see the dawn of day.  
 He hath no other life above.  
 He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
 And the New-year will take 'em away.  
 Old year, you must not go ;  
 So long as you have been with us,  
 Such joy as you have seen with us,  
 Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;  
 A jollier year we shall not see.  
 But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
 And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
 He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;  
 We did so laugh and cry with you,  
 I've half a mind to die with you,  
 Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
 But all his merry quips are o'er.  
 To see him die, across the waste  
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
 But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.  
 The night is starry and cold, my  
 friend,  
 And the New-year blithe and bold,  
 my friend,  
 Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow  
 I heard just now the crowing cock.  
 The shadows flicker to and fro :  
 The cricket chirps : the light burns low :  
 'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.  
 Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :  
 What is it we can do for you ?  
 Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
 Alack ! our friend is gone.  
 Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :  
 Step from the corpse, and let him in  
 That standeth there alone,  
 And waiteth at the door.  
 There's a new foot on the floor, my  
 friend,  
 And a new face at the door, my friend,  
 A new face at the door.

### TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
 More softly round the open wold,  
 And gently comes the world to those  
 That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
 Or else I had not dared to flow  
 In these words toward you, and invade  
 Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
 Those in whose laps our limbs are  
 nursed,  
 Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
 Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
 He lends us ; but, when love is grown  
 To ripeness, that on which it throve  
 Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
 In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;  
 Once thro' mine own doors Death did  
 pass ;  
 One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me  
 Once more. Two years his chair is  
 seen  
 Empty before us. That was he  
 Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
 Rose with you thro' a little arc  
 Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
 Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
 I honor and his living worth :  
 A man more pure and bold and just  
 Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
 Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.  
 Great Nature is more wise than I :  
 I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
 Drawn from the spirit thro' the  
 brain,  
 I will not even preach to you,  
 "Weep, weeping dulls the inward  
 pain."

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
 She loveth her own anguish deep  
 More than much pleasure. Let her will  
 Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, "God's ordinance  
 Of Death is blown in every wind" ;  
 For that is not a common chance  
 That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
 In all our hearts, as mournful light



That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
Who miss the brother of your youth ?  
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :  
Both are my friends, and my true  
breast

Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make  
Grief more. 'T were better I should  
cease

Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or  
strange.

Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

---

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or  
foes  
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom broadens slowly  
down  
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fulness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive  
thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great —  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should almost choke with golden sand —

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,  
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

---

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet :  
Above her shook the starry lights :  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and  
field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fulness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our  
dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes !

---

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought  
 From out the storied Past, and used  
 Within the Present, but transfused  
 Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
 Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
 For English natures, freemen, friends,  
 Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
 Nor feed with crude imaginings  
 The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,  
 That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
 To weakness, neither hide the ray  
 From those, not blind, who wait for  
 day,  
 Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;  
 But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
 Before her to whatever sky  
 Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the  
 years :  
 Cut Prejudice against the grain :  
 But gentle words are always gain :  
 Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
 Of pension, neither count on praise :  
 It grows to guerdon after-days :  
 Nor deal in watch-words overmuch :

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;  
 Not master'd by some modern term ;  
 Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :  
 And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
 With Life, that, working strongly,  
 binds —  
 Set in all lights by many minds,  
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
 And moist and dry, devising long,  
 Thro' many agents making strong,  
 Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
 Our being, lest we rust in ease.

We all are changed by still degrees,  
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
 To ingroove itself with that, which flies,  
 And work, a joint of state, that plies  
 Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;  
 For all the past of Time reveals  
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
 A motion toiling in the gloom —  
 The Spirit of the years to come  
 Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
 Completion in a painful school ;  
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
 New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,  
 But vague in vapor, hard to mark ;  
 And round them sea and air are dark  
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
 Is bodied forth the second whole.  
 Regard gradation, lest the soul  
 Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
 And heap their ashes on the head ;  
 To shame the boast so often made,  
 That we are wiser than our sires.

O yet, if Nature's evil star  
 Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
 To follow flying steps of Truth  
 Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
 Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
 And this be true, till Time shall close,  
 That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
 To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
 But with his hand against the hilt,  
 Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
 Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
 Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
 That knowledge takes the sword away —

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
 From either side, nor veil his eyes :  
 And if some dreadful need should rise  
 Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
 As we bear blossoms of the dead ;  
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

### THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
 Her rags scarce held together ;  
 There strode a stranger to the door,  
 And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
 He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
 "Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,  
 It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
 A goose — 't was no great matter.  
 The goose let fall a golden egg  
 With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
 And ran to tell her neighbors ;  
 And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
 And rested from her labors.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
 Grew plump and able-bodied ;  
 Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
 The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
 She felt her heart grow prouder :

But ah ! the more the white goose laid  
 It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;  
 It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :  
 She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
 And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note !"  
 Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
 "Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
 I will not bear it longer."

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat ;  
 Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
 The goose flew this way and flew that,  
 And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor  
 They flounder'd all together,  
 There strode a stranger to the door,  
 And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,  
 He utter'd words of scorning ;  
 "So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
 It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
 And round the attics rumbled,  
 Till all the tables danced again,  
 And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
 The blast was hard and harder.  
 Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
 And a whirlwind clear'd the larder :

And while on all sides breaking loose  
 Her household fled the danger,  
 Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,  
 And God forget the stranger !"

## ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS.

(PUBLISHED 1842.)

## THE EPIC.

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-  
eve, —

The game of forfeits done — the girls all  
kiss'd

Beneath the sacred bush and past away —  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard  
Hall,

The host, and I sat round the wassail-  
bowl,

Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held  
a talk,

How all the old honor had from Christ-  
mas gone,

Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd  
games

In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the  
pond,

Where, three times slipping from the  
outer edge,

I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard

The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commission-  
ers,

Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down

Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, "at home was

little left,  
And none abroad : there was no anchor,  
none,

To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt  
his hand

On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by  
him."

"And I," quoth Everard, "by the was-  
sail-bowl."

"Why yes," I said, "we knew your  
gift that way

At college : but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then,)

What came of that?" "You know,"  
said Frank, "he burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve  
books" —

And then to me demanding why? "O,  
sir,

He thought that nothing new was said,  
or else

Something so said 't was nothing — that  
a truth

Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.

It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay, nay,"  
said Hall,

"Why take the style of those heroic times?  
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,

Nor we those times ; and why should any  
man

Remodel models ? these twelve books of  
mine

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-  
worth,

Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt."  
"But I,"

Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from  
this hearth,

And have it : keep a thing, its use will  
come.

I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."  
He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy, like a

horse  
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my

ears ;  
For I remember'd Everard's college fame

When we were Freshmen : then at my  
request

He brought it ; and the poet little urged,  
But with some prelude of disparagement,

Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,  
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

## MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;

Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fall'n in Lyonness about their Lord,

King Arthur : then, because his wound  
was deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,

And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,

That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one



Lay a great water, and the moon was full.  
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
 " The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such  
 a sleep  
 They sleep — the men I loved. I think  
 that we  
 Shall nevermore, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
 deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
 I perish by this people which I made, —  
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
 again  
 To rule once more — but let what will  
 be, be,  
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
 That without help I cannot last till morn.  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
 Which was my pride : for thou remem-  
 berest how  
 In those old days, one summer noon, an  
 arm  
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
 ful,  
 Holding the sword, — and how I row'd  
 across  
 And took it, and have worn it, like a  
 king :  
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
 In aftertime, this also shall be known :  
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
 And fling him far into the middle mere :  
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
 me word."  
 To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :  
 " It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
 thus,  
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
 word."  
 So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
 stept  
 And in the moon athwart the place of  
 tombs,  
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
 men,  
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
 sang  
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
 stepping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.  
 There drew he forth the brand Excali-  
 bur,  
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
 ran forth  
 And sparkled keen with frost against the  
 hilt :  
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
 sparks,  
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
 That both his eyes were dazzled, as he  
 stood,  
 This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
 In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
 There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
 That whistled stiff and dry about the  
 marge.  
 So strode he back slow to the wounded  
 King.  
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
 vere :  
 " Hast thou perform'd my mission which  
 I gave ?  
 What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast  
 heard ?"  
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
 " I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
 And the wild water lapping on the crag."  
 To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
 and pale :  
 " Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy  
 name,  
 Not rendering true answer, as be seem'd  
 Thy féalty, nor like a noble knight :  
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the  
 thing  
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me  
 word."  
 Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
 mere,  
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
 thought ;  
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
 How curiously and strangely chased, he  
 smote  
 His palms together, and he cried aloud.  
 " And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,



"An arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake  
Clothed in white samite."

Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men.

What good should follow this, if this were  
done ?

What harm, undone ? deep harm to dis-  
obey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself ?

The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumors of a doubt ? but were this  
kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty  
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the  
deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'

So might some old man speak in the af-  
tertime

To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honor and much fame  
were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own con-  
ceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,

And so strode back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing  
heavily :

"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much  
in wrath :

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious  
hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee  
hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the  
moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd  
in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful,

And caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath :

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard,  
or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere :

"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the  
gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-  
ing him ;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful,

That caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breath-  
ing hard :

"My end draws nigh ; 't is time that I  
were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
weight,

And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall  
die."

So saying, from the pavement he half  
rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found  
not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one  
knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of  
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted  
hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his  
bed



When all the house is mute. So sigh'd  
 the King,  
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
 "Quick, quick !  
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die."  
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge  
 to ridge,  
 Clothed with his breath, and looking, as  
 he walk'd,  
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
 He heard the deep behind him, and a  
 cry  
 Before. His own thought drove him like  
 a goad.  
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and  
 right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
 as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
 heels —  
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter moon.  
 Then saw they how there hove a dusky  
 barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
 Beneath them ; and descending they were  
 ware  
 That all the decks were dense with stately  
 forms  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream  
 — by these  
 Three Queens with crowns of gold — and  
 from them rose  
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
 And, as it were one voice, an agony  
 Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
 All night in a waste land, where no one  
 comes,  
 Or hath come, since the making of the  
 world.  
 Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in  
 the barge,"  
 And to the barge they came. There those  
 three Queens  
 Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
 and wept.  
 But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
 And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
 chafed his hands,  
 And call'd him by his name, complaining  
 loud,  
 And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
 Striped with dark blood : for all his face  
 was white

And colorless, and like the wither'd  
 moon  
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing  
 east ;  
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
 with drops  
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous  
 curls —  
 That made his forehead like a rising sun  
 High from the dais-throne — were parch'd  
 with dust ;  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
 fringed his lips.  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in  
 rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
 charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.  
 Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-  
 vere,  
 "Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I  
 go ?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
 eyes ?  
 For now I see the true old times are  
 dead,  
 When every morning brought a noble  
 chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble  
 knight.  
 Such times have been not since the light  
 that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dis-  
 solved  
 Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
 And the days darken round me, and the  
 years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other  
 minds."  
 And slowly answered Arthur from the  
 barge :  
 "The old order changeth, yielding place  
 to new,  
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
 world.  
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I  
 have done  
 May He within himself make pure ! but  
 thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,





"All the decks were dense with stately forms,  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold."

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought  
by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,  
let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and  
day.  
For what are men better than sheep or  
goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long  
way

With these thou seest — if indeed I go —  
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
 To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light,  
 that long

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,  
 flared and fell :

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,

And waked with silence, grunted  
 "Good !" but we

Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read —

Perhaps some modern touches here and there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness —

Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ;

I know not : but we sitting, as I said,  
 The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year

The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,

"There now — that's nothing !" drew a little back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,

That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :  
 And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
 To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
 Point after point ; till on to dawn, when dreams

Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
 To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,

There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
 Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,  
 "Arthur is come again : he cannot die."  
 Then those that stood upon the hills behind

Repeated — "Come again, and thrice as fair" ;

And, further inland, voices echoed —  
 "Come

With all good things, and war shall be no more."

At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
 That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed

The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ; OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
 When I and Eustace from the city went  
 To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I and he,  
 Brothers in Art ; a friendship so complete  
 Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew

The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules ;  
 So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
 He, by some law that holds in love, and draws

The greater to the lesser, long desired

A certain miracle of symmetry,  
 A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
 Summ'd up and closed in little ; — Juliet, she

Solight of foot, so light of spirit, — O, she  
 To me myself, for some three careless moons,

The summer pilot of an empty heart  
 Unto the shores of nothing ! Know you not

Such touches are but embassies of love,  
 To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
 Empire for life ? but Eustace painted her,

And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
 "When will *you* paint like this ?" and I replied,

(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)

" 'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love,  
unperceived,  
A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made  
those eyes  
Darker than darkest pansies, and that  
hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of  
March."

And Juliet answer'd laughing, " Go and  
see

The Gardener's daughter : trust me, after  
that,

You scarce can fail to match his master-  
piece."

And up we rose, and on the spur we  
went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor  
quite

Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells ;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you  
hear

The windy clanging of the minster clock ;  
Although between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad  
stream,

That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the  
oar,

Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd  
kine,

And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous  
wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in her-  
self,

Grew, seldom seen : not less among us  
lived

Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not  
heard

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter ?  
Where was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot ? The common  
mouth,

So gross to express delight, in praise of  
her

Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,

Yet this is also true, that, long before  
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of  
hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like  
winged seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul ;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of  
balm

To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of  
thought,

That verged upon them, sweeter than the  
dream

Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark  
East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal  
morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went

To see her. All the land in flowery  
squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one  
large cloud

Drew downward : but all else of Heaven  
was pure

Up to the Sun, and May from verge to  
verge,

And May with me from head to heel.  
And now,

As tho' 't were yesterday, as tho' it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with all  
its sound,

(For those old Mays had thrice the life  
of these,)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to  
graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the path-  
way, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,  
And lowing to his fellows. From the  
woods

Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
The lark could scarce get out his notes  
for joy,

But shook his song together as he near'd  
His happy home, the ground. To left  
and right,

The cuckoo told his name to all the hills ;  
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm ;

The redcap whistled ; and the nightingale  
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said  
to me,



"Hear how the bushes echo ! by my life,  
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think  
you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song ?  
Or have they any sense of why they sing ?  
And would they praise the heavens for  
what they have ?"

And I made answer, "Were there nothing else

For which to praise the heavens but only love,

That only love were cause enough for praise."

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,

And on we went ; but ere an hour had pass'd,

We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North ;

Down which a well-worn pathway courted us

To one green wicket in a privet hedge ;  
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk

Thro' crowded lilac - ambush trimly pruned ;

And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.

The garden stretches southward. In the midst

A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.

The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily  
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

"Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps the house."

He nodded, but a moment afterwards

He cried, "Look ! look !" Before he ceased I turn'd,

And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm aloft —

Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape —

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.  
A single stream of all her soft brown hair

Pour'd on one side : the shadow of the flowers

Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist —

Ah, happy shade — and still went wavering down,

But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced

The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground !

But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd

Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,  
And doubled his own warmth against her

lips,  
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast

As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,

She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we near'd the house ; but she, a Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd

Into the world without ; till close at hand,  
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,

This murmur broke the stillness of that air

Which brooded round about her :

"Ah, one rose, One rose, but one, by those fair fingers

cull'd,  
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips

Less exquisite than thine."

She look'd : but all Suffused with blushes — neither self-

possess'd  
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,

Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips

For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,

Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,

In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,  
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there

Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star

Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way

With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.



"Now," said he, "will you climb the  
top of Art.

You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
The Titianic Flora. Will you match  
My Juliet? you, not you, — the Master,  
Love,

A more ideal Artist he than all."

So home I went, but could not sleep  
for joy,

Reading her perfect features in the gloom,  
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and  
o'er,

And shaping faithful record of the glance  
That graced the giving — such a noise of  
life

Swarm'd in the golden present, such a  
voice

Call'd to me from the years to come, and  
such

A length of bright horizon rimm'd the  
dark.

And all that night I heard the watchman  
peal

The sliding season : all that night I heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy  
hours.

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
Distilling odors on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir  
to all,

Made this night thus. Henceforward  
squall nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden where she  
dwelt.

Light pretences drew me : sometimes a  
Dutch love

For tulips ; then for roses, moss or musk,  
To grace my city-rooms ; or fruits and  
cream

Served in the weeping elm ; and more and  
more

A word could bring the color to my cheek ;  
A thought would fill my eyes with happy  
dew ;

Love trebled life within me, and with each  
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,  
One after one, thro' that still garden  
pass'd :

Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;  
And each in passing touch'd with some  
new grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by  
day,

Like one that never can be wholly known,  
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought  
an hour

For Eustace, when I heard his deep " I  
will,"

Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to  
hold

From thence thro' all the worlds : but I  
rose up

Full of his bliss, and following her dark  
eyes

Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
The wicket-gate, and found her standing  
there.

There sat we down upon a garden  
mound,

Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms

Enwound us both ; and over many a range  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,

Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Reveal'd their shining windows : from  
them clash'd

The bells ; we listen'd ; with the time we  
play'd ;

We spoke of other things ; we coursed  
about

The subject most at heart, more near and  
near,

Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling  
round

The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke  
to her,

Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,

Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ;

And in that time and place she answer'd  
me,

And in the compass of three little words,  
More musical than ever came in one,

The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering, " I am  
thine."

Shall I cease here ? Is this enough to  
say

That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,

Merged in completion ? Would you learn  
at full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial  
grades

Beyond all grades develop'd ? and indeed  
I had not stayed so long to tell you all,

But while I mused came Memory with  
sad eyes,

Holding the folded annals of my youth ;  
And while I mused, Love with knit brows  
went by,

And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
Andspake, "Be wise : not easily forgiven  
Are those, who, setting wide the doors  
that bar

The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
Let in the day." Here, then, my words  
have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare-  
wells —

Of that which came between, more sweet  
than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves  
That tremble round a nightingale — in  
sighs

Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utter-  
ance,

Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I  
not tell

Of difference, reconciliation, pledges  
given,

And vows, where there was never need  
of vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild  
leap

Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
The heavens between their fairy fleeces  
pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting  
stars ;

Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-  
lit,

Spread the light haze along the river-  
shores,

And in the hollows ; or as once we met  
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain  
Night slid down one long stream of sigh-  
ing wind,

And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have  
been intent

On that veil'd picture — veil'd, for what  
it holds

May not be dwelt on by the common day.  
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise  
thy soul ;

Make thine heart ready with thine eyes :  
the time

Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,

As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
My first, last love ; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and, alas !  
Now the most blessed memory of mine  
age.

## DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd at  
them,

And often thought, "I'll make them man  
and wife."

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd towards William ; but the  
youth, because

He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day

When Allan call'd his son, and said,  
"My son :

I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I die :  
And I have set my heart upon a match.

Now therefore look to Dora : she is well  
To look to : thrifty too beyond her age.

She is my brother's daughter : he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he  
died

In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora : take her for your  
wife ;

For I have wish'd this marriage, night  
and day,

For many years." But William answer'd  
short :

"I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora." Then the old  
man

Was wroth, and doubled up his hands,  
and said :

"You will not, boy ! you dare to answer  
thus !

But in my time a father's word was law,  
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;  
Consider, William : take a month to  
think,

And let me have an answer to my wish ;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall  
pack,

And never more darken my doors again."  
But William answer'd madly ; bit his  
lips,

And broke away. The more he look'd at  
her

The less he liked her ; and his ways were  
harsh ;

But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
The month was out he left his father's  
house,

And hired himself to work within the  
fields ;

And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed

A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing,  
Allan call'd

His niece and said : " My girl, I love you well ;

But if you speak with him that was my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,

My home is none of yours. My will is law."

And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,

" It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change ! "

And days went on, and there was born a boy

To William ; then distresses came on him ;  
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.

But Dora stored what little she could save,  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know

Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought

Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said :

" I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,  
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,

And for this orphan, I am come to you :  
You know there has not been for these five years

So full a harvest : let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad

Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not ; for none of all his men  
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;

And Dora would have risen and gone to him,

But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took

The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;

And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat

To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
He spied her ; and he left his men at work,  
And came and said : " Where were you yesterday ?

Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ? "

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, " This is William's child ! "

" And did I not," said Allan, " did I not  
Forbid you, Dora ? " Dora said again :  
" Do with me as you will, but take the child

And bless him for the sake of him that's gone ! "

And Allan said, " I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
I must be taught my duty, and by you !  
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared

To slight it. Well — for I will take the boy ;

But go you hence, and never see me more."

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud

And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell

At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,  
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,

More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,  
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down

And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood

Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise

To God, that help'd her in her widow-hood.

And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy ;  
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :  
He says that he will never see me more."  
Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never  
be,

That thou shouldst take my trouble on  
thyself :

And, now I think, he shall not have the  
boy,

For he will teach him hardness, and to  
slight

His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,  
And I will have my boy, and bring him  
home ;

And I will beg of him to take thee back :  
But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one  
house,

And work for William's child, until he  
grows

Of age to help us."

So the women kiss'd  
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the  
farm.

The door was off the latch : they peep'd,  
and saw

The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's  
knees,

Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on the  
cheeks,

Like one that loved him : and the lad  
stretch'd out

And babbled for the golden seal, that  
hung

From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the  
fire.

Then they came in : but when the boy  
beheld

His mother, he cried out to come to her :  
And Allan set him down, and Mary said :

"O Father ! — if you let me call you  
so —

I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child ; but now I  
come

For Dora : take her back ; she loves you  
well.

O Sir, when William died, he died at  
peace

With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he  
said,

He could not ever rue his marrying me —  
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he  
said

That he was wrong to cross his father  
thus :

'God bless him !' he said, 'and may he  
never know

The troubles I have gone thro' !' Then  
he turn'd

His face and pass'd — unhappy that I  
am !

But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for  
you

Will make him hard, and he will learn  
to slight

His father's memory ; and take Dora back,  
And let all this be as it was before."

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;  
And all at once the old man burst in  
sobs : —

"I have been to blame — to blame.  
I have kill'd my son.

I have kill'd him — but I loved him —  
my dear son.

May God forgive me ! — I have been to  
blame.

Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many  
times.

And all the man was broken with re-  
morse ;

And all his love came back a hundred-  
fold ;

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er  
William's child,

Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
Within one house together ; and as years  
Went forward, Mary took another mate ;  
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## AUDLEY COURT.

"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and  
not a room

For love or money. Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court."

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Hum'd like a hive all round the narrow  
quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
And breathing of the sea. "With all  
my heart,"

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro'  
the swarm,





"I have been to blame — to blame. I have kill'd my son,  
I have kill'd him — but I loved him — my dear son."

And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly  
lipp'd

The flat red granite ; so by many a sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we  
reach'd

The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro'  
all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's  
lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and its  
walls

And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
A damask napkin wrought with horse  
and hound,

Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of  
home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,

Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret  
lay,

Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
Imbedded and injellied ; last, with these,  
A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew ; and so we sat  
and eat

And talk'd old matters over ; who was dead,  
Who married, who was like to be, and how  
The races went, and who would rent the  
hall :

Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce  
it was

This season ; glancing thence, discuss'd  
the farm,

The fourfield system, and the price of  
grain ;

And struck upon the corn-laws, where  
we split,

And came again together on the king  
With heated faces ; till he laugh'd aloud ;

And, while the blackbird on the pippin  
hung  
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and  
sang —

“Oh ! who would fight and march and  
countermarch,  
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
And shovell'd up into a bloody trench  
Where no one knows ? but let me live  
my life.

“Oh ! who would cast and balance at  
a desk,  
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd  
stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
Are full of chalk ? but let me live my life.

“Who 'd serve the state ? for if I  
carved my name

Upon the cliffs that guard my natieland,  
I might as well have traced it in the sands ;  
The sea wastes all : but let me live my  
life.

“Oh ! who would love ? I woo'd a  
woman once,

But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
Turns from the sea ; but let me live my life.”

He sang his song, and I replied with  
mine :

I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Rob-  
ert's pride,

His books—the more the pity, so I said —  
Came to the hammer here in March —  
and this —

I set the words, and added names I knew.  
“Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and  
dream of me :

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is  
mine.

“Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm ;  
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

“Sleep, breathing health and peace  
upon her breast :

Sleep, breathing love and trust against  
her lip :

I go to-night : I come to-morrow morn.  
“I go, but I return : I would I were  
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.  
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream  
of me.”

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,  
My friend ; and I, that having where-  
withal,

And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
Did what I would ; but ere the night we  
rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon,  
that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills ; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming  
quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us : lower  
down

The bay was oily calm ; the harbor-buoy  
Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

## WALKING TO THE MAIL.

*John.* I 'm glad I walk'd. How fresh  
the meadows look  
Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
The whole hillside was redder than a fox.  
Is yon plantation where this byway joins  
The turnpike ?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by ?

*James.* The mail ? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now ?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see ?  
No, not the County Member's with the  
vane :

Up higher with the yewtree by it, and half  
A score of gables.

*James.* That ? Sir Edward Head's :  
But he 's abroad : the place is to be sold.

*John.* O, his. He was not broken.

*James.* No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid  
his face

From all men, and commercing with  
-himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily life —  
That keeps us all in order more or less —  
And sick of home went overseas for change.

*John.* And whither ?

*James.* Nay, who knows ? he 's here  
and there.

But let him go ; his devil goes with him,  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What 's that ?

*James.* You saw the man — on Mon-  
day, was it ? —

There by the humpback'd willow ; half  
stands up  
And bristles ; half has fall'n and made a  
bridge ;  
And there he caught the younker tick-  
ling trout —  
Caught in *flagrante* — what 's the Latin  
word ? —

*Delicto* : but his house, for so they say,  
Washaunted with a jolly ghost, that shook  
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at  
doors,

And rummaged like a rat : no servant  
stay'd :

The farmer vext packs up his beds and  
chairs,

And all his household stuff ; and with  
his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails  
him, "What !

You 're flitting !" "Yes, we 're flitting,"  
says the ghost,

(For they had pack'd the thing among  
the beds,)

"O well," says he, "you flitting with  
us too —

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home  
again."

*John.* He left his wife behind ; for so I  
heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my  
lady once :

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* O yet but I remember, ten  
years back —

'T is now at least ten years — and then  
she was —

You could not light upon a sweeter thing :  
A body slight and round, and like a  
pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
As clean and white as privet when it  
flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades,  
and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and  
dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame  
and pride,

New things and old, himself and her,  
she sour'd

To what she is : a nature never kind !  
Like men, like manners : like breeds  
like, they say.

Kind nature is the best : those manners  
next

That fit us like a nature second-hand ;  
Which are indeed the manners of the  
great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill  
that past,

And fear of change at home, that drove  
him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the  
cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff  
brought

A Chartist pike. You should have seen  
him wince

As from a venomous thing : he thought  
himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a  
cry

Should break his sleep by night, and his  
nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody  
thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but, sir,  
you know

That these two parties still divide the  
world —

Of those that want, and those that have :  
and still

The same old sore breaks out from age  
to age

With much the same result. Now I my-  
self,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
Destructive, when I had not what I  
would.

I was at school — a college in the South :  
There lived a flayflint near ; we stole his  
fruit,

His hens, his eggs ; but there was law for  
us ;

We paid in person. He had a sow, sir.  
She,

With meditative grunts of much content,  
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and  
mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the college  
tower

From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew  
stair

With hand and rope we haled the groan-  
ing sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she  
pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the mother  
sow,

And but for daily loss of one she loved,

As one by one we took them — but for this —

As never sow was higher in this world —  
Might have been happy : but what lot is pure ?

We took them all, till she was left alone  
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

*John.* They found you out ?

*James.* Not they.

*John.* Well — after all —

What know we of the secret of a man ?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us,  
who are sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool the  
world,

Which charts us all in its coarse blacks  
or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows

To Pity — more from ignorance than will.

But put your best foot forward, or I fear  
That we shall miss the mail : and here  
it comes

With five at top : as quaint a four-in-hand  
As you shall see — three pyebalds and a  
roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a  
year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :

See here, my doing : curves of mountain,  
bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a  
rock,

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :  
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, million-  
naires,

Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chimneyed  
bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull  
The curate ; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the  
names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss and  
fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the  
rocks,

Who taught me how to skate, to row, to  
swim,

Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own — I call'd him Crichton, for he  
seem'd

All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
And his first passion ; and he answer'd me ;

And well his words became him : was he  
not

A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he  
spoke.

“My love for Nature is as old as I ;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love  
for her.

My love for Nature and my love for her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.

To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move and  
change

With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between ;  
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it  
sweet

To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to  
breathe.”

Or this or something like to this he  
spoke.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward  
Bull,

“I take it, God made the woman for  
the man,

And for the good and increase of the world.  
A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight ; but these unreal  
ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed  
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid  
stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the  
world.”

“Parson,” said I, “you pitch the pipe  
too low :

But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his :  
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,



I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce have other music : yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such a  
dream ?”

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

“ Give ?

Give all thou art,” he answer'd, and a light  
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek ;  
“ I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
To save her little finger from a scratch.  
No deeper than the skin : my ears could  
hear

Her lightest breaths : her least remark  
was worth

The experience of the wise. I went and  
came ;

Her voice fled always thro' the summer  
land ;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy  
days !

The flower of each, those moments when  
we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no more.”

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did ? but something  
jarr'd ;

Whether he spoke too largely ; that there  
seem'd

A touch of something false, some self-  
conceit,

Or over-smoothness : howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humor, and I said :

“ Friend Edwin, do not think yourself  
alone

Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and  
left ?

But you can talk : yours is a kindly vein :  
I have, I think, — Heaven knows — as  
much within ;

Have, or should have, but for a thought  
or two,

That like a purple beech among the greens  
Looks out of place : 't is from no want in  
her :

It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
Or something of a wayward modern mind  
Dissecting passion. Time will set me  
right.”

So spoke I knowing not the things  
that were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward  
Bull :

“ God made the woman for the use of man,  
And for the good and increase of the  
world.”

And I and Edwin laugh'd ; and now we  
paused

About the windings of the marge to hear  
The soft wind blowing over meadowy  
holms

And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left  
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
By ripply shallows of the lispig lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the  
sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their  
crag,

My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him  
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.

'T is true, we met ; one hour I had, no more :  
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
The close “ Your Letty, only yours ” ; and  
this

Thrice underscored. The friendly mist  
of morn

Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with beating  
heart

The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving  
keel ;

And out I stept, and up I crept : she moved,  
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering  
flowers :

Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ;  
and she,

She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore  
faith, I breathed

In some new planet : a silent cousin stole  
Upon us and departed : “ Leave,” she cried,  
“ O leave me ! ” “ Never, dearest, never :

here  
I brave the worst ” : and while we stood  
like fools

Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they  
came

Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. “ What,  
with him !

Go ” (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus ) ;  
“ him ! ”

I choked. Again they shriek'd the bur-  
den — “ Him ! ”

Again with hands of wild rejection “ Go ! —  
Girl, get you in ! ” She went — and in  
one month

They wedded her to sixty thousand  
pounds,

To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
And slight Sir Robert with his watery  
smile

And educated whisker. But for me,  
They set an ancient creditor to work :  
It seems I broke a close with force and  
arms :

There came a mystic token from the king  
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !  
I read, and fled by night, and flying  
turn'd :

Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :  
I turn'd once more, close-buttoned to the  
storm ;

So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to  
hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps : yet long  
ago

I have pardon'd little Letty ; not indeed,  
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;  
For in the dust and drouth of London life  
She moves among my visions of the lake,  
While the prime swallow dips his wing,  
or then

While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
The light cloud smoulders on the summer  
crag.

### ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and crust  
of sin,

Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce  
meet

Fortroops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn and  
sob,

Battering the gates of heaven with storms  
of prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.  
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty  
God,

This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,  
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes  
and cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and  
sleet, and snow ;

And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
Thou wouldst have caught me up into  
thy rest,

Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
The meed of saints, the white robe and  
the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not  
breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this,  
were still

Less burden, by ten-hundred-fold, to  
bear,

Than were those lead-like tons of sin,  
that crush'd

My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,

Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt  
away,

Would chatter with the cold, and all my  
beard

Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with  
sound

Of pious hymns and psalms, and some-  
times saw

An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws  
nigh ;

I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,  
So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost  
blind,

And scarce can recognize the fields I know ;  
And both my thighs are rotted with the  
dew ;

Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary  
head,

Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the  
stone,

Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved? who is it may be  
saved ?

Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more  
than I.

For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of  
death.

Bear witness, if I could have found a way

(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley  
there,

For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the  
well,

Twisted as tight as I could knot the  
noose ;

And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than  
this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow  
to thee,

I lived up there on yonder mountainside.  
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist,  
and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and  
sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eating  
not,

Except the spare chance-gift of those  
that came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst man-  
kind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou,  
O God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.

Have mercy, mercy ; cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with  
thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of  
twelve ;

And twice three years I crouch'd on one  
that rose

Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as  
this —

Or else I dream — and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow  
crowns —

So much — even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and  
say,

“ Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast suf-  
fer'd long

For ages and for ages ! ” then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethar-  
gies,

That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are  
choked.

But yet  
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all  
the saints

Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on  
earth

House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-  
some food,

And wear warm clothes, and even beasts  
have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the  
light,

Bow down one thousand and two hun-  
dred times,

To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the  
Saints ;

Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crack-  
ling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back ;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the  
cross,

And strive and wrestle with thee till I  
die :

O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I  
am ;

A sinful man, conceived and born in sin :  
'T is their own doing ; this is none of  
mine ;

Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for  
this,

That here come those that worship me ?  
Ha ! ha !

They think that I am somewhat. What  
am I ?

The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and  
flowers :

And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness  
here)

Have all in all endured as much, and  
more

Than many just and holy men, whose  
names

Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
What is it I can have done to merit this ?  
I am a sinner viler than you all.

It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
And cured some halt and maim'd ; but  
what of that ?

It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
May match his pains with mine ; but  
what of that ?

Yet do not rise ; for you may look on me,  
And in your looking you may kneel to  
God.

Speak ! is there any of you halt or  
maim'd ?

I think you know I have some power with  
Heaven

From my long penance : let him speak  
his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth  
from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah,  
hark ! they shout

“ St. Simeon Stylites.” Why, if so,  
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
Can I work miracles and not be saved ?  
This is not told of any. They were saints.  
It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;  
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, “ Be-  
hold a saint ! ”

And lower voices saint me from above.  
Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis  
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere  
death

Spreads and more and more and more, that  
God hath now

Sponged and made blank of crime's full  
record all

My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,

I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,  
The watcher on the column till the end ;  
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine  
bakes ;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours be-  
come

Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
From my high nest of penance here pro-  
claim

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals  
I lay,

A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath

Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my  
sleeve ;

Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.

I smote them with the cross ; they swarm'd  
again.

In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd  
my chest :

They flapp'd my light out as I read : I saw  
Their faces grow between me and my  
book ;

With colt-like whinny and with hoggish  
whine

They burst my prayer. Yet this way  
was left,

And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and  
with thorns ;

Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may  
be, fast

Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with  
slow steps,

With slow, faint steps, and much ex-  
ceeding pain,

Have scrambled past those pits of fire,  
that still

Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the  
praise :

God only thro' his bounty hath thought  
fit,

Among the powers and princes of this  
world,

To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not  
say

But that a time may come — yea, even  
now,

Now, now, his footsteps smite the thresh-  
old stairs

Of life — I say, that time is at the doors  
When you may worship me without re-  
proach ;

For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,

And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest  
pain

Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike  
change,

In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the  
end !

Surely the end ! What 's here ? a shape,  
a shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
That holds a crown ? Come, blessed  
brother, come.



I know thy glittering face. I waited long ;  
My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?  
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch  
it. Christ !

'T is gone : 't is here again ; the crown !  
the crown !

So now 't is fitted on and grows to me,  
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and  
frankincense.

Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints :  
I trust

That I am whole, and clean, and meet  
for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of  
God,

Among you there, and let him presently  
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
And climbing up into my airy home,  
Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;  
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
Aid all this foolish people ; let them take  
Example, pattern : lead them to thy light.

### THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;

Once more before my face

I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
Beneath its drift of smoke ;  
And ah ! with what delighted eyes  
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appeal'd  
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarized a heart,  
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd, under Heaven  
None else could understand ;

I found him garrulously given,  
A babler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour ;  
'T were well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs. —

“ O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old Summers, year by year,  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

“ Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

“ Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And number'd bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,  
And turn'd the cowl's adrift :

“ And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces, that would thrive  
When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five ;

“ And all that from the town would stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
Went by me, like a stork :

“ The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays :

“ And I have shadow'd many a group  
Of beauties, that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn ;

“ And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leap'd and laugh'd  
The modest Cupid of the day,  
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

"I swear (and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall)  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all ;

"For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
Have faded long ago ;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

"From when she gamboll'd on the greens,  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

"I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
(And hear me with thine ears,)  
That, tho' I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years —

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

"For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh."

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace ;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

"O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town ;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

"And with him Albert came on his.  
I look'd at him with joy :  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

"An hour had past — and, sitting  
straight  
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

"But, as for her, she stay'd at home  
And on the roof she went,

And down the way you used to come,  
She look'd with discontent.

"She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf ;  
She left the new piano shut :  
She could not please herself.

"Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

"A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child :

"But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,  
And turn'd to look at her.

"And here she came, and round me play'd,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my 'giant bole' ;

"And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist :  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

"I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands.

"Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold."

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace !  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

"O yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

"A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

"Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain ;  
But not a creature was in sight :  
She kiss'd me once again.

"Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd :

"And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn'd.

"Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm —  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

"I, rooted here among the groves,  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust :

"For ah ! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

"But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,



"She glanced across the plain ;  
But not a creature was in sight :  
She kiss'd me once again."



"She had not found me so remiss ;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well ;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

"T is little more : the day was warm ;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

"Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

"I took the swarming sound of life —  
The music from the town —  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye ;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly ;

"A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine ;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine.

"Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest —  
Dropt dews upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

"But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

"And yet it was a graceful gift —  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

"I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.

He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me.

"O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further thro' the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Summer-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
That but a moment lay  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetize  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
That art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery top  
All throats that gurgle sweet !  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow —  
And while he sinks or swells  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes !  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride



And when my marriage morn may fall,  
She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
And praise thee more in both  
Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,  
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
And mystic sentence spoke ;  
And more than England honors that,  
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
Till all the paths were dim,  
And far below the Roundhead rode,  
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

Of love that never found his earthly close,  
What sequel ? Streaming eyes and break-  
ing hearts ?

Or all the same as if he had not been ?  
Not so. Shall Error in the round of  
time

Still father Truth ? O shall the braggart  
shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom work  
itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law  
System and empire ? Sin itself be found  
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun ?  
And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
Mere highway dust ? or year by year alone  
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of him-  
self ?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were  
all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless  
days,

The long mechanic paces to and fro,  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.

But am I not the nobler thro' thy love ?  
O three times less unworthy ! likewise thou  
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy  
years.

The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will  
bring

The drooping flower of knowledge changed  
to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait : my faith is large in  
Time,  
And that which shapes it to some perfect  
end.

Will some one say, Then why not ill for  
good ?

Why took ye not your pastime ? To that  
man

My work shall answer, since I knew the  
right

And did it ; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a man.  
— So let me think 't is well for thee and  
me —

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart  
so slow

To feel it ! For how hard it seem'd to me,  
When eyes, love-languid thro' half-tears,  
would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
Then not to dare to see ! when thy low  
voice,

Faltering, would break its syllables, to  
keep

My own full-tuned, — hold passion in a  
leash,

And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,  
And on thy bosom, (deep-desired relief !)  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that  
weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses and my soul !  
For Love himself took part against  
himself

To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love —  
O this world's curse, — beloved but hated  
— came

Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and  
mine,

And crying, " Who is this ? behold thy  
bride,"

She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to these —  
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :  
Hard is my doom and thine : thou know-  
est it all.

Could Love part thus ? was it not well  
to speak,

To have spoken once ? It could not but  
be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us all  
things good,

The slow sad hours that bring us all  
things ill,

And all good things from evil, brought  
the night

In which we sat together and alone,  
 And to the want, that hollow'd all the  
     heart,  
 Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
 That burn'd upon its object thro' such  
     tears  
 As flow but once a life.

    The trance gave way  
 To those caresses, when a hundred times  
 In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
 Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and  
     died.  
 Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the  
     words  
 That make a man feel strong in speaking  
     truth ;  
 Till now the dark was worn, and overhead  
 The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd  
 In that brief night ; the summer night,  
     that paused  
 Among her stars to hear us ; stars that  
     hung  
 Love-charm'd to listen : all the wheels  
     of Time  
 Spun round in station, but the end had  
     come.

O then like those, who clench their  
     nerves to rush  
 Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
 There — closing like an individual life —  
 In one blind cry of passion and of pain,  
 Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
 Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,  
 And bade adieu for ever.

    Live — yet live —  
 Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing  
     all

Life needs for life is possible to will —  
 Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended  
     by

My blessing ! Should my Shadow cross  
     thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou  
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest  
     hold,

If not to be forgotten — not at once —  
 Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy  
     dreams,

O might it come like one that looks con-  
     tent,

With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
 And point thee forward to a distant light,  
 Or seem to lift a burden from thy heart  
 And leave thee freer, till thou wake re-  
     fresh'd,

Then when the first low matin-chirp hath  
     grown

Full quire, and morning driv'n her plough  
     of pearl  
 Far furrowing into light the mounded  
     rack,  
 Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

## THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which  
 Leonard wrote :

It was last summer on a tour in Wales :  
 Old James was with me : we that day  
     had been

Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for Leonard  
     there,

And found him in Llanberis : then we  
     crossed

Between the lakes, and clamber'd half  
     way up

The counter side ; and that same song of  
     his

He told me ; for I banter'd him, and swore  
 They said he lived shut up within himself,  
 A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,  
 That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,  
 Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech,

    “ Give,  
 Cram us with all,” but count not me the  
     herd !

To which “ They call me what they  
 will,” he said :

“ But I was born too late : the fair new  
     forms,

That float about the threshold of an age,  
 Like truths of Science waiting to be  
     caught —

Catch me who can, and make the catcher  
     crown'd —

Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
 These measured words, my work of yes-  
     termorn.

“ We sleep and wake and sleep, but all  
     things move ;

The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;  
 The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her  
     ellipse ;

And human things returning on them-  
     selves

Move onward, leading up the golden year.

“ Ah, tho' the times, when some new  
     thought can bud,

Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,  
 Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,  
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their  
     march,

And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

“When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,  
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt  
In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
And light shall spread, and man be liker man

Thro’ all the season of the golden year.

“Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?

If all the world were falcons, what of that?  
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

“Fly, happy happy sails and bear the Press;

Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

“But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men’s good

Be each man’s rule, and universal Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,  
Thro’ all the circle of the golden year?”

Thus far he flow’d, and ended; whereupon

“Ah, folly!” in mimic cadence answer’d James —

“Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time, nor in our children’s time,  
’T is like the second world to us that live;  
’T were all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven

As on this vision of the golden year.”

With that he struck his staff against the rocks

And broke it, — James, — you know him,  
— old, but full

Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,  
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
O’erflourish’d with the hoary clematis:  
Then added, all in heat:

“What stuff is this!

Old writers push’d the happy season back, —

The more fools they, — we forward: dreamers both:

You most, that in an age, when every hour  
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,  
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge

His hand into the bag: but well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,

This same grand year is ever at the doors.”

He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast

The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap

And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,

By this still hearth, among these barren crags,

Match’d with an aged wife, I mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink  
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy’d  
Greatly, have suffer’d greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when

Thro’ scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known; cities of men  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,

Myself not least, but honor’d of them all;  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro’  
Gleams that untravell’d world, whose margin fades

For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish’d, not to shine in use!  
As tho’ to breathe were life. Life piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains: but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.



This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work,  
 I mine.

There lies the port: the vessel puffs  
 her sail:  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My  
 mariners,  
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and  
 thought with me —  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took

The thunder and the sunshine, and op-  
 posed

Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I  
 are old;

Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;  
 Death closes all: but something ere the  
 end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with  
 Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
 The long day wanes: the slow moon  
 climbs: the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come,  
 my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose  
 holds



"There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:  
 There gloom the dark broad seas."



To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us  
down :  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we  
knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides : and  
tho'  
We are not now that strength which in  
old days  
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we  
are, we are ;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong  
in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while  
as yet 't is early morn :  
Leave me here, and when you want me,  
sound upon the bugle horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of old,  
the curlews call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying  
over Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance over-  
looks the sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into  
cataracts.



"'T is the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall."

Many a night from yonder ivied casement,  
ere I went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly  
to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising  
thro' the mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in  
a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nour-  
ishing a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the  
long result of Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a  
fruitful land reposed ;  
When I clung to all the present for the  
promise that it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human  
eye could see ;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the  
wonder that would be. —

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon  
the robin's breast ;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets  
himself another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on  
the burnish'd dove ;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly  
turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than  
should be for one so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a  
mute observance hung.

And I said, " My cousin Amy, speak, and  
speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my  
being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a  
color and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the  
northern night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with  
a sudden storm of sighs —  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark  
of hazel eyes —

Saying, " I have hid my feelings, fearing  
they should do me wrong" ;  
Saying, " Dost thou love me, cousin ?"  
weeping, " I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd  
it in his glowing hands ;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself  
in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote  
on all the chords with might ;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling,  
pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we  
hear the copses ring,  
And her whisper throug'd my pulses with  
the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we  
watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the  
touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my  
Amy, mine no more !  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the  
barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than  
all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to  
a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ? — having  
known me — to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a nar-  
rower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his  
level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse  
to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art  
mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have  
weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall  
have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little  
dearer than his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think  
not they are glazed with wine.  
Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him :  
take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain  
is overwrought :  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch  
him with thy lighter thought.



"Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips."

He will answer to the purpose, easy things  
to understand —

Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I  
slew thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from  
the heart's disgrace,

Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent  
in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against  
the strength of youth !

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from  
the living truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from  
honest Nature's rule !

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd  
forehead of the fool !

Well — 't is well that I should bluster ! —  
Hadst thou less unworthy proved —

Would to God — for I had loved thee  
more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that  
which bears but bitter fruit ?

I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my  
heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such  
length of years should come

As the many-winter'd crow that leads the  
clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the  
records of the mind ?

Can I part her from herself, and love her,  
as I knew her, kind ?



<p>I remember one that perish'd : sweetly          did she speak and move :          Such a one do I remember, whom to look          at was to love.</p> <p>Can I think of her as dead, and love her          for the love she bore ?          No — she never loved me truly : love is          love for evermore.</p> <p>Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this          is truth the poet sings,          That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is re-          membering happier things.</p> <p>Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it,          lest thy heart be put to proof,          In the dead unhappy night, and when          the rain is on the roof.</p> <p>Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou          art staring at the wall,          Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and          the shadows rise and fall.</p> <p>Then a hand shall pass before thee, point-          ing to his drunken sleep,          To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the          tears that thou wilt weep.</p> <p>Thou shalt hear the "Never, never,"          whisper'd by the phantom years,          And a song from out the distance in the          ringing of thine ears ;</p> <p>And an eye shall vex thee, looking an-          cient kindness on thy pain.          Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get          thee to thy rest again.</p> <p>Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for          a tender voice will cry.          'T is a purer life than thine ; a lip to          drain thy trouble dry.</p> <p>Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest          rival brings thee rest.          Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me          from the mother's breast.</p> <p>O, the child too clothes the father with          a dearness not his due.          Half is thine and half is his : it will be          worthy of the two.</p> <p>O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy          petty part,          With a little hoard of maxims preaching          down a daughter's heart.</p>	<p>"They were dangerous guides the feelings          — she herself was not exempt —          Truly, she herself had suffer'd" — Perish          in thy self-contempt !</p> <p>Overlive it — lower yet — be happy !          wherefore should I care ?          I myself must mix with action, lest I          wither by despair.</p> <p>What is that which I should turn to,          lighting upon days like these ?          Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens          but to golden keys.</p> <p>Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all          the markets overflow.          I have but an angry fancy : what is that          which I should do ?</p> <p>I had been content to perish, falling on          the foeman's ground,          When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and          the winds are laid with sound.</p> <p>But the jingling of the guinea helps the          hurt that Honor feels,          And the nations do but murmur, snarl-          ing at each other's heels.</p> <p>Can I but relive in sadness ? I will turn          that earlier page.          Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou          wondrous Mother-Age !</p> <p>Make me feel the wild pulsation that I          felt before the strife,          When I heard my days before me, and          the tumult of my life ;</p> <p>Yearning for the large excitement that          the coming years would yield,          Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves          his father's field,</p> <p>And at night along the dusky highway          near and nearer drawn,          Sees in heaven the light of London flar-          ing like a dreary dawn ;</p> <p>And his spirit leaps within him to be          gone before him then,          Underneath the light he looks at, in          among the throngs of men ;</p> <p>Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever          reaping something new :          That which they have done but earnest          of the things that they shall do :</p>
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"Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast."

For I dipt into the future, far as human  
eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the  
wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argo-  
sies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping  
down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and  
there rain'd a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling  
in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the  
south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plung-  
ing thro' the thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer,  
and the battle-flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation  
of the world.

There the common sense of most shall  
hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt  
in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping  
thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left  
me with the jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things  
here are out of joint :  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creep-  
ing on from point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion,  
creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind  
a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one in-  
creasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd  
with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not  
harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for  
ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,  
and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the  
world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,  
and he bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward  
the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sound-  
ing on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a  
target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on  
such a moulder'd string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have  
loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! wo-  
man's pleasure, woman's pain —  
Nature made them blinder motions  
bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy  
passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as  
water unto wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, noth-  
ing. Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my  
life began to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my  
father evil-starr'd ; —  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a self-  
ish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to  
wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gate-  
ways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow  
moons and happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in  
cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an  
European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland,  
swings the trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower,  
hangs the heavy-fruited tree —  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-pur-  
ple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment  
more than in this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the  
thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall  
have scope and breathing-space ;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall  
rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall  
dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and  
hurl their lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap  
the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over  
miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I  
*know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than  
the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant  
of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a  
beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage — what to  
me were sun or clime ?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost  
files of time —

I that rather held it better men should  
perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze  
like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. For-  
ward, forward let us range.  
Let the great world spin for ever down  
the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep  
into the younger day :  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle  
of Cathay.

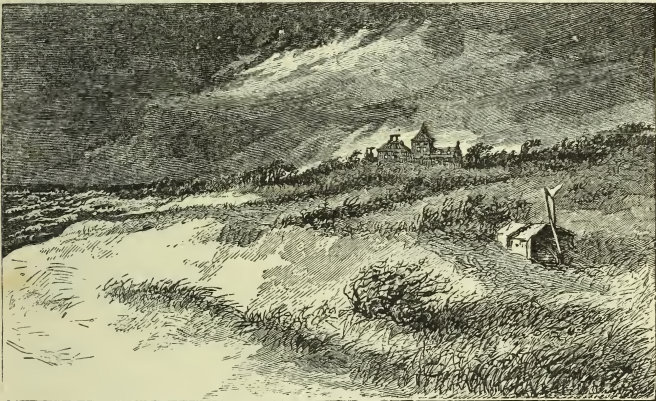
Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help  
me as when life begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash  
the lightnings, weigh the Sun —

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit  
hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro'  
all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long fare-  
well to Locksley Hall !  
Now for me the woods may wither, now  
for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, black-  
ening over heath andholt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its  
breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain  
or hail, or fire or snow ;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring sea-  
ward, and I go.



“ Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath andholt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.”

GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the  
bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires ; and there  
I shaped*

*The city's ancient legend into this : —*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Crydown the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the  
people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but  
she

Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax

Upon his town, and all the mothers  
brought

Their children, clamoring, “ If we pay,  
we starve ! ”

She sought her lord, and found him,  
where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their  
tears,

And pray'd him, “ If they pay this tax,  
they starve.”

Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
“ You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these* ? ” — “ But I would  
die,” said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by  
Paul :

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear ;



"O ay, ay, ay, you talk!" — "Alas!"  
she said,

"But prove me what it is I would not do."  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, "Ride you naked thro' the  
town,

And I repeat it"; and nodding, as in  
scorn,

He parted, with great strides among his  
dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and  
blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trum-  
pet, all

The hard condition; but that she would  
loose

The people: therefore, as they loved her  
well,

From then till noon no foot should pace  
the street,

No eye look down, she passing; but that  
all

Should keep within, door shut, and win-  
dow barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower,  
and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook her  
head,

And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her  
knee;

Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair  
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam,  
slid

From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway; there she found her pal-  
frey trapt

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with  
chastity:

The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed  
for fear.

The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the  
spout

Had cunning eyes to see: the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's  
footfall shot

Light horrors thro' her pulses: the blind  
walls

Were full of chinks and holes; and  
overhead

Fantastic gables, crowding, stared: but  
she

Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the  
field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archways in the  
wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with  
chastity:

And one low churl, compact of thankless  
earth,

The fatal byword of all years to come,  
Boring a little augur-hole in fear,  
Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had  
their will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
And dropt before him. So the Powers,  
who wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;  
And she, that knew not, pass'd: and all  
at once,

With twelve great shocks of sound, the  
shameless noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hun-  
dred towers,

One after one: but even then she gain'd  
Her bower; whence reissuing, robed and  
crown'd,

To meet her lord, she took the tax away  
And built herself an everlasting name.

## THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
"Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?"

Then to the still small voice I said;  
"Let me not cast in endless shade  
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply;  
"To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk: from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings: like gauze they  
grew:  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, "When first the world began,  
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.





"Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt."

"She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest,  
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied ;  
"Self-blinded are you by your pride :  
Look up thro' night : the world is wide.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres ?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind :  
"Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall :  
"No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;  
"Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,  
Who 'll weep for thy deficiency ?

"Or will one beam be less intense,  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell'd in the world of sense ?"

I would have said, "Thou canst not  
know,"  
But my full heart, that work'd below,  
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :  
"Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely 't were better not to be.

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep :  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep."

I said, "The years with change advance :  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

"Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
Ev'n yet." But he: "What drug can  
make  
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?"

I wept, "Tho' I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

"And men, thro' novelspheres of thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "sometime,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

"Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

"Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The fuzzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that "all the years invent ;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

"Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?"

"The highest-mounted mind," he said,  
"Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

"Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main ?

"Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town ?

"Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

"Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

"'T were better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

"Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, "When I am gone away,  
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
Doing dishonor to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,  
"To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou — a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee ? Art thou so bound  
To men, that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground ?

"The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust ;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,  
"From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride !

"Nay — rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

"When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

"I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear —

"Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life —

"Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love —

"As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about —

"To search thro' all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law :

"At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

"To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

"In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown ;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke,  
And all the war is roll'd in smoke."

"Yea !" said the voice, "thy dream was  
good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour ?

"Then comes the check, the change, the  
fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

"Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

"Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labor little-worth.

"That men with knowledge merely  
play'd,  
I told thee — hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade ;

"Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hopesome truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not : either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb : the summit's slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wraith in dense cloud from base to cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost  
strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

"And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?  
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,  
"Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

"I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

"But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head —

"Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.



"He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with  
stones :

"But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt :  
"Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd."

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new :

"Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

"For I go, weak from suffering here ;  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear ?"

"Consider well," the voice replied,  
"His face, that two hours since hath died ;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

"Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands ?  
He answers not, nor understands.

"His palms are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

"His lips are very mild and meek :  
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

"His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonor to her race —

"His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honor, some to shame, —  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

"High up the vapors fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him."

"If all be dark, vague voice," I said,  
"These things are wrapt in doubt and  
dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

"The sap dries up : the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

"I found him when my years were few ;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

"From grave to grave the shadow crept :  
In her still place the morning wept :  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crown'd his head :  
'Omega ! thou art Lord,' they said,  
'We find no motion in the dead.'

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

"Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense ?

"He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly :  
His heart forebodes a mystery :  
He names the name Eternity.

"That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labor working to an end.

"The end and the beginning vex  
His reason : many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

"He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something good,  
He may not do the thing he would.



"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

"Ah ! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt.

"But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

"The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve."

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

"Where wert thou when thy father play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

"A merry boy they called him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again.

"Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man :

"Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days :

"A life of nothings, nothing worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth !"

"These words," I said, "are like the rest,  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast :

"But if I grant, thou might'st defend  
The thesis which thy words intend —  
That to begin implies to end ;

"Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould ?

"I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.

"As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

"So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.

"But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

"Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

"Or if thro' lower lives I came —  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame —

"I might forget my weaker lot ;  
For is not our first year forgot ?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

"For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, should she climb  
Beyond her own material prime ?

"Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

"Of something felt, like something here;  
Of something done, I know not where ;  
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laugh'd. "I talk," said he,  
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast miss'd thy  
mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

“Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new ?

“Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long’d for death.

“’Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
O life, not death, for which we pant ;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.”

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
“Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.”

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften’d airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God’s house the people prest :  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter’d like a welcome guest.

One walk’d between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean’d on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk’d demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander’d on :  
I spoke, but answer came there none :  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, “Be of better cheer.”

As from some blissful neighborhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
“I see the end, and know the good.”

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
“I may not speak of what I know.”

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem’d the whisper at my side .  
“What is it thou knowest, sweet voice ?”  
I cried.

“A hidden hope,” the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho’ no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature’s living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder’d at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers :  
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder’d, while I paced along :  
The woods were fill’d so full with song,  
There seem’d no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seem’d all things wrought,  
I marvell’d how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, “Rejoice ! rejoice !”

## THE DAY-DREAM.

### PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :  
A pleasant hour has past away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
As by the lattice you reclined,  
I went thro’ many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming — and, behind,  
A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dream’d, until at last  
Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,  
And loosely settled into form.  
And would you have the thought I had,  
And see the vision that I saw,

Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
 A crimson to the quaint Macaw,  
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye —  
 The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
 And order'd words asunder fly.

## THE SLEEPING PALACE.

## I.

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
 Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;  
 Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
 Here stays the blood along the veins.  
 Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,  
 Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
 Like hints and echoes of the world  
 To spirits folded in the womb.

## II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
 On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
 The fountain to his place returns  
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
 Here droops the banner on the tower,  
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
 The peacock in his laurel bower,  
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :  
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
 The mantles from the golden pegs  
 Droop sleepily : no sound is made,  
 Not even of a gnat that sings.  
 More like a picture seemeth all  
 Than those old portraits of old kings,  
 That watch the sleepers from the wall.

## IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
 Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and  
 there  
 The wrinkled steward at his task,  
 The maid-of-honor blooming fair ;  
 The page has caught her hand in his :  
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak :  
 His own are pouted to a kiss :  
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

## V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
 Make prisms in every carven glass,  
 And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
 His state the king reposing keeps.  
 He must have been a jovial king.

## VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
 At distance like a little wood ;  
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
 And grapes with bunches red as blood ;  
 All creeping plants, a wall of green  
 Close-matted, burr and brake and brier,  
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
 High up, the topmost palace-spire.

## VII.

When will the hundred summers die,  
 And thought and time be born again,  
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
 Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
 Here all things in their place remain,  
 As all were order'd, ages since.  
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
 And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

## I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
 She lying on her couch alone,  
 Across the purpled coverlet,  
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
 On either side her tranced form  
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :  
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
 And moves not on the rounded curl.

## II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
 Languidly ever ; and, amid  
 Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
 With bracelets of the diamond bright :  
 Her constant beauty doth inform  
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

## III.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard  
 In palace chambers far apart.  
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
 That lie upon her charmed heart.  
 She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :  
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE ARRIVAL.

## I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
 To those that seek them issue forth ;  
 For love in sequel works with fate,  
 And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
 He travels far from other skies —  
 His mantle glitters on the rocks —  
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II.

The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove in other days to pass,  
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
 He gazes on the silent dead :  
 "They perish'd in their daring deeds."  
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
 "The many fail : the one succeeds."

## III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :  
 He breaks the hedge : he enters there :  
 The color flies into his cheeks :  
 He trusts to light on something fair ;  
 For all his life the charm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind :  
 The Magic Music in his heart  
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
 The quiet chamber far apart.  
 His spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops — to kiss her — on his knee.  
 "Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must be !"

## THE REVIVAL.

## I.

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;  
 A fuller light illumined all,  
 A breeze thro' the garden swept,  
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

## II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,

The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock  
 squall'd,  
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and  
 clackt,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III.

And last with these the king awoke,  
 And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and  
 spoke,  
 "By holy rood, a royal beard !  
 How say you ? we have slept, my lords.  
 My beard has grown into my lap."  
 The barons swore, with many words,  
 'T was but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV.

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still  
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
 I mention'd half an hour ago ?"  
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
 In courteous words return'd reply :  
 But dallied with his golden chain,  
 And, smiling, put the question by.

## THE DEPARTURE.

## I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
 And round her waist she felt it fold,  
 And far across the hills they went  
 In that new world which is the old :  
 Across the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 And deep into the dying day  
 The happy princess follow'd him.

## II.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,  
 O love, for such another kiss" ;  
 "O wake for ever, love," she hears,  
 "O love, 't was such as this and this."  
 And o'er them many a sliding star,  
 And many a merry wind was borne,  
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
 The twilight melted into morn.

## III.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep !"  
 "O happy sleep, that lightly fled !"





"How say you? we have slept, my lords.  
My beard has grown into my lap."

"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"  
"O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!"  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

## IV.

"A hundred summers! can it be?  
And whither goest thou, tell me where?"  
"O seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater wonders there."  
And o'er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL.

## I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,

Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.  
O, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose?

## II.

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
According as his humors lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications lie  
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;  
So 't were to cramp its use, if I  
Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI.

## I.

You shake your head. A random string  
Your finer female sense offends.

Well — were it not a pleasant thing  
 To fall asleep with all one's friends ;  
 To pass with all our social ties  
 To silence from the paths of men ;  
 And every hundred years to rise  
 And learn the world, and sleep again ;  
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
 And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
 As wild as aught of fairy lore ;  
 And all that else the years will show,  
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
 The Federations and the Powers ;  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
 In divers seasons, divers climes ;  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
 And in the morning of the times.

## II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,  
 Or gay quinqueniads would we reap  
 The flower and quintessence of change.

## III.

Ah, yet would I — and would I might !  
 So much your eyes my fancy take —  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
 That I might kiss those eyes awake !  
 For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
 To choose your own you did not care ;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there :  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you ;  
 Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV.

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd  
 hopes ?  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd ?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fulness of the pensive mind ;  
 Which all too dearly self-involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see :

But break it. In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name may give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And, if you find a meaning there,  
 O whisper to your glass, and say,  
 "What wonder, if he thinks me fair ?"  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,  
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot  
 light ?  
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue —  
 But take it — earnest wed with sport,  
 And either sacred unto you.

## AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,  
 But it is wild and barren,  
 A garden too with scarce a tree,  
 And waster than a warren :  
 Yet say the neighbors when they call,  
 It is not bad but good land,  
 And in it is the germ of all  
 That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
 In days of old Amphion,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 Nor cared for seed or scion !  
 And had I lived when song was great,  
 And legs of trees were limber,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 And fiddled in the timber !

'T is said he had a tuneful tongue,  
 Such happy intonation,  
 Wherever he sat down and sung  
 He left a small plantation ;  
 Wherever in a lonely grove  
 He set up his forlorn pipes,  
 The gouty oak began to move,  
 And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown.  
 And, as tradition teaches,  
 Young ashes pirouetted down  
 Coquetting with young beeches ;

And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
 Ran forward to his rhyming,  
 And from the valleys underneath  
 Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
 The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
 And down the middle buzz ! she went  
 With all her bees behind her :  
 The poplars, in long order due,  
 With cypress promenaded,  
 The shock-head willows two and two  
 By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shot alder from the wave,  
 Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,  
 Poussetting with a sloe-tree :  
 Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
 The vine stream'd out to follow,  
 And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
 From many a cloudy hollow.

And was n't it a sight to see,  
 When, ere his song was ended,  
 Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
 The country-side descended ;  
 And shepherds from the mountain-eaves  
 Look'd down, half-pleased, half-  
 frighten'd,  
 As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
 The random sunshine lighten'd !

O, nature first was fresh to men,  
 And wanton without measure ;  
 So youthful and so flexile then,  
 You moved her at your pleasure.  
 Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs !  
 And make her dance attendance ;  
 Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
 And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'T is vain ! in such a brassy age  
 I could not move a thistle ;  
 The very sparrows in the hedge  
 Scarce answer to my whistle ;  
 Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
 With strumming and with scraping,  
 A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
 The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
 Like sleepy counsel pleading ;  
 O Lord ! — 't is in my neighbor's ground,  
 The modern Muses reading.  
 They read Botanic Treatises,  
 And Works on Gardening thro' there,

And Methods of transplanting trees,  
 To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose  
 O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
 And show you slips of all that grows  
 From England to Van Diemen.  
 They read in arbors clipt and cut,  
 And alleys, faded places,  
 By squares of tropic summer shut  
 And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
 Are neither green nor sappy ;  
 Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
 The spindlings look unhappy.  
 Better to me the meanest weed  
 That blows upon its mountain,  
 The vilest herb that runs to seed  
 Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
 And years of cultivation,  
 Upon my proper patch of soil  
 To grow my own plantation.  
 I'll take the showers as they fall,  
 I will not vex my bosom :  
 Enough if at the end of all  
 A little garden blossom.

## ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
 Are sparkling to the moon :  
 My breath to heaven like vapor goes :  
 May my soul follow soon !  
 The shadows of the convent-towers  
 Slant down the snowy sward,  
 Still creeping with the creeping hours  
 That lead me to my Lord :  
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
 As are the frosty skies,  
 Or this first snowdrop of the year  
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
 To yonder shining ground ;  
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
 To yonder argent round ;  
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee ;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be.  
 Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
 In raiment white and clean.





" My breath to heaven like vapor goes :  
May my soul follow soon ! "

He lifts me to the golden doors ;  
The flashes come and go ;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strews her lights below,  
And deepens on and up ! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
To make me pure of sin.  
The sabbaths of Eternity,  
One sabbath deep and wide —  
A light upon the shining sea —  
The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
My tough lance thrusteth sure,

My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure.  
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and  
fly,  
The horse and rider reel :  
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favors fall !  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall :  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :



I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Memightier transports move and thrill ;  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns :  
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
I hear a voice, but none are there ;  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair.  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
I find a magic bark ;  
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
I float till all is dark.  
A gentle sound, an awful light !  
Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.  
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringings, springs from brand and  
mail ;  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight — to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear ;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odors haunt my dreams ;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armor that I wear,

This weight and size, this heart and  
eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :  
"O just and faithful knight of God !  
Ride on ! the prize is near."  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.

## EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way,  
"And have you lost your heart ?" she  
said ;  
"And are you married yet, Edward  
Gray ?"

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
"Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's will :  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

"Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;  
Thought her proud, and fled over the  
sea ;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
Cruelly came they back to-day :  
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,  
'To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'

"There I put my face in the grass —  
Whisper'd, 'Listen to my despair :  
I repent me of all I did :  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
And here the heart of Edward Gray !'



" All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail."

" Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree :  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

" Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
And there the heart of Edward Gray ! "

# WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
To which I most resort,  
How goes the time ? 'T is five o'clock.  
Go fetch a pint of port :

But let it not be such as that  
You set before chance-comers,  
But such whose father-grape grew fat  
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
But may she still be kind,  
And whisper lovely words, and use  
Her influence on the mind,  
To make me write my random rhymes,  
Ere they be half-forgotten ;  
Nor add and alter, many times,  
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
Her laurel in the wine,  
And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
These favor'd lips of mine ;  
Until the charm have power to make  
New lifeblood warm the bosom,

And barren commonplaces break  
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;  
Her gradual fingers steal  
And touch upon the master-chord  
Of all I felt and feel.  
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
And phantom hopes assemble ;  
And that child's heart within the man's  
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
By many pleasant ways,  
Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days :  
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;  
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;  
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
Unboding critic-pen,  
Or that eternal want of pence,  
Which vexes public men,  
Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
For that which all deny them —  
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
Half-views of men and things.  
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;  
There must be stormy weather ;  
But for some true result of good  
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;  
If old things, there are new ;  
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
Yet glimpses of the true.  
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
As on this whirligig of Time  
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;  
With fair horizons bound :  
This whole wide earth of light and shade  
Comes out, a perfect round.  
High over roaring Temple-bar,  
And, set in Heaven's third story,  
I look at all things as they are,  
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest  
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,  
The pint, you brought me, was the best  
That ever came from pipe.  
But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
Is there some magic in the place ?  
Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
No pint of white or red  
Had ever half the power to turn  
This wheel within my head,  
Which bears a season'd brain about,  
Unsubject to confusion,  
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
With many kinsmen gay,  
Where long and largely we carouse  
As who shall say me nay :  
Each month, a birthday coming on,  
We drink defying trouble,  
Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
Had relish fiery-new,  
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
As old as Waterloo ;  
Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)  
In musty bins and chambers,  
Had cast upon its crusty side  
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !  
She answer'd to my call,  
She changes with that mood or this,  
Is all-in-all to all :  
She lit the spark within my throat,  
To make my blood run quicker,  
Used all her fiery will, and smote  
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
The waiter's hands, that reach  
To each his perfect pint of stout,  
His proper chop to each.  
He looks not like the common breed  
That with the napkin dally ;  
I think he came like Ganymede,  
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
Than modern poultry drop,  
Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
And cramm'd a plumper crop ;



Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
 Crow'd lustier late and early,  
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
 Till in a court he saw  
 A something-pottle-bodied boy,  
 That knuckled at the taw :  
 Hestoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,  
 Flew over roof and casement :  
 His brothers of the weather stood  
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
 And follow'd with acclains,  
 A sign to many a staring shire,  
 Came crowing over Thames.  
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
 Till, where the street grows straiter,  
 One fix'd for ever at the door,  
 And one became head-waiter.

---

But whither would my fancy go ?  
 How out of place she makes  
 The violet of a legend blow  
 Among the chops and steaks !  
 'T is but a steward of the can,  
 One shade more plump than common ;  
 As just and mere a serving-man  
 As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down  
 Into the common day ?  
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
 Which I shall have to pay ?  
 For, something duller than at first,  
 Nor wholly comfortable,  
 I sit (my empty glass reversed),  
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife  
 I take myself to task ;  
 Lest of the fulness of my life  
 I leave an empty flask :  
 For I had hope, by something rare,  
 To prove myself a poet :  
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
 Till they be gather'd up ;  
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
 Will haunt the vacant cup :  
 And others' follies teach us not,  
 Nor much their wisdom teaches ;

And most, of sterling worth, is what  
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !  
 We know not what we know.  
 But for my pleasant hour, 't is gone,  
 'T is gone, and let it go.  
 'T is gone : a thousand such have slipt  
 Away from my embraces,  
 And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went  
 Long since, and came no more ;  
 With peals of genial clamor sent  
 From many a tavern-door,  
 With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
 From misty men of letters ;  
 The tavern-hours of mighty wits —  
 Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
 Had yet their native glow :  
 Nor yet the fear of little books  
 Had made him talk for show ;  
 But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
 He flash'd his random speeches ;  
 Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
 His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,  
 Like all good things on earth !  
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou  
 last,  
 At half thy real worth ?  
 I hold it good, good things should pass :  
 With time I will not quarrel :  
 It is but yonder empty glass  
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
 To which I most resort,  
 I too must part : I hold thee dear  
 For this good pint of port.  
 For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
 Marrow of mirth and laughter ;  
 And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots :  
 Thy latter days increased with pence  
 Go down among the pots :  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.



We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot ;  
*Thy* care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot ;  
 To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit,  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick-set hazel dies ;  
 Long, ere the hateful crows shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes :  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more ;  
 No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,  
 Shall show thee past to Heaven :  
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
 A pint-pot, neatly graven.

TO ———,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

"Cursed be he that moves my bones."  
*Shakespeare's Epitaph.*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
 If such be worth the winning now,  
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
 A life that moves to gracious ends  
 Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
 A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown :  
 Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die  
 Nor leave his music as of old,  
 But round him ere he scarce be cold  
 Begins the scandal and the cry :

"Proclaim the faults he would not show :  
 Break lock and seal : betray the trust :  
 Keep nothing sacred : 't is but just  
 The many-headed beast should know."

Ah shameless ! for he did but sing  
 A song that pleased us from its worth ;  
 No public life was his on earth,  
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best :  
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
 My Shakespeare's curse on clown and  
 knave  
 Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
 The little life of bank and brier,  
 The bird that pipes his lone desire  
 And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
 And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
 For whom the carrion vulture waits  
 To tear his heart before the crowd !

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN  
 GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
 The long divine Peneïan pass,  
 The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
 With such a pencil, such a pen,  
 You shadow forth to distant men,  
 I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
 And track'd you still on classic ground,  
 I grew in gladness till I found  
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
 And glisten'd — here and there alone  
 The broad-limb'd Gods at random  
 thrown  
 By fountain-urns ; — and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
 Of cavern pillars ; on the swell  
 The silver lily heaved and fell ;  
 And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
 By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,  
 To him who sat upon the rocks,  
 And fluted to the morning sea.

## LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,  
And clouds are highest up in air,  
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :  
Lovers long-betroth'd were they :  
They two will wed the morrow morn :  
God's blessing on the day !

"He does not love me for my birth,  
Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;  
He loves me for my own true worth,  
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
Said, "Who was this that went from  
thee ?"

"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,  
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thank'd !" said Alice the  
nurse,

"That all comes round so just and  
fair :

Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
And you are not the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my  
nurse ?"

Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so  
wild ?"



"Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
To give his cousin, Lady Clare."

"As God's above," said Alice the nurse,  
 "I speak the truth : you are my child.

"The old Earl's daughter died at my breast ;

I speak the truth, as I live by bread !  
 I buried her like my own sweet child,  
 And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
 O mother," she said, "if this be true,  
 To keep the best man under the sun  
 So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,

"But keep the secret for your life,  
 And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,  
 When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,  
 "I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
 Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
 And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,

"But keep the secret all ye can."  
 She said, "Not so : but I will know  
 If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith ?" said Alice the nurse,

"The man will cleave unto his right."  
 "And he shall have it," the lady replied,  
 "Tho' I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !  
 Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."

"O mother, mother, mother," she said,  
 "So strange it seems to me.

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
 My mother dear, if this be so,  
 And lay your hand upon my head,  
 And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
 She was no longer Lady Clare :  
 She went by dale, and she went by down,  
 With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought

Leapt up from where she lay,  
 Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
 And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :

"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !  
 Why come you drest like a village maid,  
 That are the flower of the earth ?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,  
 I am but as my fortunes are :

I am a beggar born," she said,  
 "And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
 "For I am yours in word and in deed.

Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
 "Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up !

Her heart within her did not fail :  
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn :

He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood :

"If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I," said he, "the next in blood—

"If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I," said he, "the lawful heir,  
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
 And you shall still be Lady Clare."

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gayly,

"If my heart by signs can tell,  
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
 And I think thou lov'st me well."

She replies, in accents fainter,  
 "There is none I love like thee."

He is but a landscape-painter,  
 And a village maiden she.

He to lips, that fondly falter,  
 Presses his without reproof :  
 Leads her to the village altar,  
 And they leave her father's roof.

"I can make no marriage present :  
 Little can I give my wife.

Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
 And I love thee more than life."

They by parks and lodges going  
 See the lordly castles stand :  
 Summer woods, about them blowing,  
 Made a murmur in the land.

From deep thought himself he rouses,  
 Says to her that loves him well,  
 "Let us see these handsome houses  
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell."

So she goes by him attended,  
 Hears him lovingly converse,  
 Sees whatever fair and splendid  
 Lay betwixt his home and hers ;  
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
 Parks and order'd gardens great,  
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
 Built for pleasure and for state.  
 All he shows her makes him dearer :  
 Evermore she seems to gaze  
 On that cottage growing nearer,  
 Where they twain will spend their  
 days.  
 O but she will love him truly !  
 He shall have a cheerful home ;  
 She will order all things duly,  
 When beneath his roof they come.  
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
 Till a gateway she discerns  
 With armorial bearings stately,  
 And beneath the gate she turns ;  
 Sees a mansion more majestic  
 Than all those she saw before :  
 Many a gallant gay domestic  
 Bows before him at the door.  
 And they speak in gentle murmur,  
 When they answer to his call,  
 While he treads with footstep firmer,  
 Leading on from hall to hall.  
 And, while now she wonders blindly,  
 Nor the meaning can divine,  
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
 "All of this is mine and thine."  
 Here he lives in state and bounty,  
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
 Not a lord in all the county  
 Is so great a lord as he.  
 All at once the color flushes  
 Her sweet face from brow to chin :  
 As it were with shame she blushes,  
 And her spirit changed within.  
 Then her countenance all over  
 Pale again as death did prove :  
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
 So she strove against her weakness,  
 Tho' at times her spirit sank :  
 Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
 To all duties of her rank :  
 And a gentle consort made he,  
 And her gentle mind was such  
 That she grew a noble lady,  
 And the people loved her much.  
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
 With the burden of an honor  
 Unto which she was not born.

Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
 And she murmur'd, "O, that he  
 Were once more that landscape-painter,  
 Which did win my heart from me !"  
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
 Fading slowly from his side :  
 Three fair children first she bore him,  
 Then before her time she died.  
 Weeping, weeping late and early,  
 Walking up and pacing down,  
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
 And he came to look upon her,  
 And he look'd at her and said,  
 "Bring the dress and put it on her,  
 That she wore when she was wed."  
 Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in,  
 That her spirit might have rest.

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

### A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
 With tears and smiles from heaven again  
 The maiden Spring upon the plain  
 Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.  
 In crystal vapor everywhere  
 Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
 And far, in forest-deeps unseen,  
 The topmost elmtree gather'd green  
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :  
 Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :  
 Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,  
 Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :  
 By grassy capes with fuller sound  
 In curves the yellowing river ran,  
 And drooping chestnut-buds began  
 To spread into the perfect fan,  
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
 Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
 Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,  
 With blissful treble ringing clear.  
 She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :  
 A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
 Buckled with golden clasps before ;  
 A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
 Now by some tinkling rivulet,



In mosses mixt with violet  
 Her cream-white mule his pastern set :  
 And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains  
 Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
 By night to eery warblings,  
 When all the glimmering moorland rings  
 With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,  
 The happy winds upon her play'd,  
 Blowing the ringlet from the braid :  
 She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
 A man had given all other bliss,  
 And all his worldly worth for this,  
 To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
 Upon her perfect lips.

## A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
 Thy tribute wave deliver :  
 No more by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
 A rivulet then a river :  
 No where by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,  
 And here thine aspen shiver ;  
 And here by thee will hum the bee,  
 For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
 A thousand moons will quiver ;  
 But not by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever.

## THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid ;  
 She was more fair than words can say :  
 Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
 Before the king Cophetua.  
 In robe and crown the king stept down,  
 To meet and greet her on her way ;  
 "It is no wonder," said the lords,  
 "She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
 She in her poor attire was seen :  
 One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
 One her dark hair and lovesome mien.

So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
 In all that land had never been :  
 Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
 "This beggar maid shall be my queen !"

## THE VISION OF SIN.

## I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late :  
 A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.  
 He rode a horse with wings, that would  
 have flown,  
 But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
 And from the palace came a child of sin,  
 And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
 Expecting when a fountain should arise :  
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and  
 capes—  
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid  
 shapes,  
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,  
 and piles of grapes.

## II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
 Gathering up from all the lower ground ;  
 Narrowing in to where they sat assembled  
 Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
 Wov'n in circles : they that heard it  
 sigh'd,  
 Panted hand in hand with faces pale,  
 Swung themselves, and in low tones re-  
 plied ;  
 Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;  
 Then the music touch'd the gates and  
 died ;  
 Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;  
 Till thronging in and in, to where they  
 waited,  
 As 't were a hundred-throated nightin-  
 gale,  
 The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd  
 and palpitated ;  
 Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
 Flung the torrent rainbow round :  
 Then they started from their places,  
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,



"In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way."

Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew,  
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
Dash'd together in blinding dew :  
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
The nerve-dissolving melody  
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

### III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-  
tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and  
lawn :  
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,

Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly  
drawing near,  
A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month and  
year,  
Unheeded : and I thought I would have  
spoken,  
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too  
late :  
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine  
was broken,  
When that cold vapor touch'd the palace  
gate,  
And link'd again. I saw within my head  
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as  
death,  
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

## IV.

“ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !  
Here is custom come your way ;  
Take my brute, and lead him in,  
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

“ Bitter barmaid, waning fast !  
See that sheets are on my bed ;  
What ! the flower of life is past :  
It is long before you wed.

“ Slipshod waiter, lank and sour,  
At the Dragon on the heath !  
Let us have a quiet hour,  
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

“ I am old, but let me drink ;  
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;  
I remember, when I think,  
That my youth was half divine.

“ Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,  
When a blanket wraps the day,  
When the rotten woodland drips,  
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

“ Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :  
What care I for any name ?  
What for order or degree ?

“ Let me screw thee up a peg :  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :  
Callest thou that thing a leg ?  
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

“ Thou shalt not be saved by works :  
Thou hast been a sinner too :  
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

“ We are men of ruin'd blood ;  
Therefore comes it we are wise.  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

“ Name and fame ! to fly sublime  
Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,  
Is to be the ball of Time,  
Bandied by the hands of fools.

“ Friendship ! — to be two in one —  
Let the canting liar pack !

Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back

“ Virtue ! — to be good and just —  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

“ Oh ! we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

“ Drink, and let the parties rave :  
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean.

“ He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

“ Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gayly doth she tread ;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

“ No, I love not what is new ;  
She is of an ancient house :  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

“ Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs :  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

“ Drink to lofty hopes that cool —  
Visions of a perfect State :  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

“ Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

"Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
Set thy hary fancies free ;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savors well to thee and me.

"Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

"Tell me tales of thy first love —  
April hopes, the fools of chance ;  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

"Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads :  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

"You are bones, and what of that ?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

"Death is king, and Vivat Rex !  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam — if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones.

"No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye — nor yet your lip :  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo ! God's likeness — the ground-  
plan —  
Neither modell'd, glazed, or framed :  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed !

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath !  
Drink to heavy Ignorance !  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near :  
What ! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;  
Unto me my maudlin gall  
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup, and fill the can !  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !  
Dregs of life, and lees of man :  
Yet we will not die forlorn."

## v.

The voice grew faint : there came a fur-  
ther change :  
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-  
range :  
Below were men and horses pierced with  
worms,  
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum  
of dross,  
Old splash of rains, and refuse patch'd  
with moss.  
Then some one spake : " Behold ! it was  
a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with  
time."  
Another said : " The crime of sense be-  
came  
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."  
And one : " He had not wholly quench'd  
his power ;  
A little grain of conscience made him  
sour."  
At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, " Is there any hope ?"  
To which an answer peal'd from that  
high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand ;  
And on the glimmering limit far with-  
drawn  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

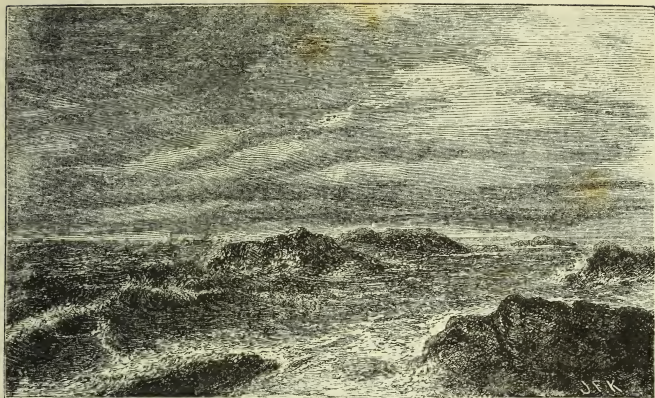
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COME not, when I am dead,  
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,  
And vex the unhappy dust thou  
wouldst not save.  
There let the wind sweep and the plover  
cry ;  
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime  
I care no longer, being all unblest :





"Break, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!"

Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of  
Time,  
And I desire to rest.  
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where  
I lie :  
Go by, go by.

### THE EAGLE.

FRAGMENT.

He clasps the crag with hooked hands ;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow :  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O, happy planet, eastward go ;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play !  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill ;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

### THE POET'S SONG.

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of the  
street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the  
sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the  
wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,

That made the wild-swan pause in her  
cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on  
his beak,  
And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, "I have  
sung many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away."

---

My life is full of weary days,  
But good things have not kept aloof,  
Nor wandered into other ways :  
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink  
Of that deep grave to which I go :  
Shake hands once more : I cannot sink  
So far — far down, but I shall know  
Thy voice, and answer from below.

### THE CAPTAIN.

#### A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

HE that only rules by terror  
Doeth grievous wrong.  
Deep as Hell I count his error,  
Let him hear my song.  
Brave the Captain was : the seamen  
Made a gallant crew,  
Gallant sons of English freemen,  
Sailors bold and true.  
But they hated his oppression,  
Stern he was and rash ;  
So for every light transgression  
Doom'd them to the lash.  
Day by day more harsh and cruel  
Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
Burnt in each man's blood.  
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
Hoped to make the name  
Of his vessel great in story,  
Wheresoe'er he came.  
So they past by capes and islands,  
Many a harbor-mouth,  
Sailing under palmy highlands  
Far within the South.

On a day when they were going  
O'er the lone expanse,  
In the north, her canvas flowing,  
Rose a ship of France.  
Then the Captain's color heighten'd,  
Joyful came his speech :  
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
In the eyes of each.  
"Chase," he said : the ship flew forward,  
And the wind did blow ;  
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
Till she near'd the foe.  
Then they look'd at him they hated,  
Had what they desired :  
Mute with folded arms they waited —  
Not a gun was fired.  
But they heard the foeman's thunder  
Roaring out their doom ;  
All the air was torn in sunder,  
Crashing went the boom,  
Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,  
Bullets fell like rain ;  
Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
Blood and brains of men.  
Spars were splinter'd ; decks were broken :  
Every mother's son —  
Down they dropt — no word was spoken —  
Each beside his gun.  
On the decks as they were lying,  
Were their faces grim.  
In their blood, as they lay dying,  
Did they smile on him.  
Those, in whom he had reliance  
For his noble name,  
With one smile of still defiance  
Sold him unto shame.  
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,  
Pale he turn'd and red,  
Till himself was deadly wounded  
Falling on the dead.  
Dismal error ! fearful slaughter !  
Years have wander'd by,  
Side by side beneath the water  
Crew and Captain lie ;  
There the sunlit ocean tosses  
O'er them mouldering,  
And the lonely seabird crosses  
With one waft of the wing.

### THREE SONNETS TO A COQUETTE.

#### I.

CARESS'D or chidden by the dainty hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch  
and stand,

And run thro' every change of sharp  
and flat ;  
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When sleep had bound her in his rosy  
band,  
And chased away the still-recurring  
gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.  
But now they live with Beauty less and  
less,  
For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,  
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious  
creeds ;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

## II.

The form, the form alone is eloquent !  
A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
Than but to dance and sing, be gayly  
drest,  
And win all eyes with all accomplish-  
ment :  
Yet in the waltzing-circle as we went,  
My fancy made me for a moment blest  
To find my heart so near the beauteous  
breast  
That once had power to rob it of content.  
A moment came the tenderness of tears,  
The phantom of a wish that once could  
move,  
A ghost of passion that no smiles  
restore —  
For ah ! the slight coquette, she can-  
not love,  
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,  
She still would take the praise, and  
care no more.

## III.

Wan Sculptor weepst thou to take the  
cast  
Of those dead lineaments that near  
thee lie ?  
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the  
past,  
In painting some dead friend from  
memory ?  
Weep on : beyond his object Love can  
last :  
His object lives : more cause to weep  
have I :  
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,  
No tears of love, but tears that Love  
can die.

I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
Nor care to sit beside her where she  
sits —  
Alpity — hint it not in human tones,  
But breathe it into earth and close it up  
With secret death for ever, in the pits  
Which some green Christmas crams  
with weary bones.

## SONG.

LADY, let the rolling drums  
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands :  
Now thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands.

Lady, let the trumpets blow,  
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee :  
Now their warrior father meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

## SONG.

HOME they brought him slain with spears.  
They brought him home at even-fall :  
All alone she sits and hears  
Echoes in his empty hall,  
Sounding on the morrow.

The Sun peep'd in from open field,  
The boy began to leap and prance,  
Rode upon his father's lance,  
Beat upon his father's shield —  
“O hush, my joy, my sorrow.”

## ON A MOURNER.

## I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
Imitates God, and turns her face  
To every land beneath the skies,  
Counts nothing that she meets with  
base,  
But lives and loves in every place ;

## II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
The swamp, where hums the dropping  
snipe,  
With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

## III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
Saying, “Beat quicker, for the time  
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways

Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

## IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
Going before to some far shrine,  
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
Till all thy life one way incline  
With one wide will that closes thine.

## V.

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them born.

## VI.

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tombing  
sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have  
trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

## VII.

Promising empire; such as those  
That once at dead of night did greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

(PUBLISHED IN 1869.)

### NORTHERN FARMER.

#### NEW STYLE.

## I.

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they  
canters awaäy?  
Proputty, proputty, proputty — that 's  
what I 'ears 'em saäy.  
Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam,  
thou 's an ass for thy paaäns:  
Theer 's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor  
in all thy braaäns.

## II.

Woä — theer 's a craw to pluck wi' tha,  
Sam: yon 's parson's 'ouse —  
Dosh't thou know that a man mun be  
eäther a man or a mouse?  
Time to think on it then; for thou 'll be  
twenty to weeäk.\*  
Proputty, proputty — woä then woä —  
let ma 'ear mysén spääk.

## III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän  
a-talkin' o' thee;  
Thou 's been talkin' to muther, an' she  
beän a tellin' it me.

\* This week.

Thou 'll not marry for munny — thou 's  
sweet upo' parson's lass —  
Noä — thou 'll marry for luvv — an' we  
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

## IV.

Seeä'd her to-daäy goä by — Saäint's-  
daay — they was ringing the bells.  
She 's a beauty thou thinks — an' soä is  
scoors o' gells,  
Them as 'as munny an' all — wot 's a  
beauty? — the flower as blows.  
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' pro-  
putty, proputty graws.

## V.

Do'ant be stunt: \* taäke time: I knows  
what maäkes tha sa mad.  
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén  
when I wur a lad?  
But I know'd a Quaäker feller as often  
'as tow'd ma this:  
"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä  
wheer munny is!"

## VI.

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy  
mother coom to 'and,  
Wi' lots o' munny laaäid by, an' a nicetish  
bit o' land.

\* Obstinate.



Maäybe she warn't a beauty : — I niver  
giv it a thowt —  
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss  
as a lass as 'ant nowt ?

## VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a  
nowt when 'e's deäð,  
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and  
addle \* her breäð :  
Why ? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt  
nivir git naw 'igher ;  
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor  
'e coom'd to the shire.

## VIII.

And thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots  
o' 'Varsity debt,  
Stook to his taañ they did, an' 'e 'ant  
got shut on 'em yet.  
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi'  
noän to lend 'im a shove,  
Woorse nor a far-welter'd † yowe : fur,  
Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

## IX.

Luvv ? what 's luvv ? thou can luvv thy  
lass an' 'er munny too,  
Maakin' 'em goä together as they 've good  
right to do.  
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o'  
'er munny laaäð by ?  
Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor  
fur it : reäson why.

## X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to  
marry the lass,  
Cooms of a gentleman burn : an' we boäth  
on us thinks tha an ass.  
Woä then, proputtty, wiltha ? — an ass as  
near as mays nowt — ‡  
Woä then, wiltha ? dangtha ! — the bees  
is as fell as ow. §

## XI.

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäð,  
lad, out o' the fence !  
Gentleman burn ! what 's gentleman  
burn ? is it shillins an' pence ?  
Proputtty, proputtty 's ivrything 'ere, an',  
Sammy, I'm blest  
If it is n't the saäme oop yonder, fur  
them as 'as it's the best.

\* Earn.

† Or fow-welter'd, — said of a sheep lying on its back  
in the furrow.

‡ Makes nothing.

§ The flies are as fierce as anything.

## XII.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as break's into  
'ouses an' steäls,  
Them as 'ascoäts to their backs an' taäkes  
their regular meäls.  
Noä, but it 's them as niver knaws wheer  
a meäl 's to be 'ad.  
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor  
in a loomp is bad.

## XIII.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a  
beän a laäzy lot,  
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin'  
whiniver munny was got.  
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt ; leaästwaays  
'is munny was 'id.  
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäð, an' 'e  
died a good un, 'e did.

## XIV.

Look thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck  
comes out by the 'ill !  
Feyther run up to the farm, an' I runs  
up to the mill ;  
An' I 'll run up to the brig, an' that  
thou 'll live to see ;  
And if thou marries a good un I 'll leäve  
the land to thee.

## XV.

Thim 's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby  
I means to stick ;  
But if thou marries a bad un, I 'll leäve  
the land to Dick. —  
Coom oop, proputtty, proputtty — that 's  
what I 'ears 'im saäy —  
Proputtty, proputtty, proputtty — canter  
an' canter awaäy.

## THE GOLDEN SUPPER.

[This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio.

A young lover, Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her and the strange sequel of it. He speaks of having been haunted in delirium by visions and the sound of bells, sometimes tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage ; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.]

HE flies the event : he leaves the event  
to me :  
Poor Julian — how he rush'd away ; the  
bells,  
Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and  
heart —

But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,  
As who should say "continue." Well,  
he had  
One golden hour — of triumph shall I say?  
Solace at least — before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour  
of his!  
He moved thro' all of it majestically —  
Restrain'd himself quite to the close —  
but now —

Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-  
bells,  
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
I never ask'd : but Lionel and the girl  
Were wedded, and our Julian came again  
Back to his mother's house among the  
pines.

But these, their gloom, the mountains  
and the Bay,  
The whole land weigh'd him down as  
Ætna does

The Giant of Mythology : he would go,  
Would leave the land for ever, and had  
gone

Surely, but for a whisper "Go not yet,"  
Some warning, and divinely as it seem'd  
By that which follow'd — but of this I  
deem

As of the visions that he told — the event  
Glanced back upon them in his after life,  
And partly made them — tho' he knew  
it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not look  
at her —

No, not for months : but, when the  
eleventh moon

After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,  
Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and  
said,

Would you could toll me out of life, but  
found —

All softly as his mother broke it to him —  
A crueller reason than a crazy ear,  
For that low knell tolling his lady dead —  
Dead — and had lain three days without  
a pulse :

All that look'd on her had pronounced  
her dead.

And so they bore her (for in Julian's  
land

They never nail a dumb head up in elm),  
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of  
heaven,

And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then? not die : he is  
here and hale —

Not plunge headforemost from the moun-  
tain there,

And leave the name of Lover's Leap :  
not he :

He knew the meaning of the whisper now,  
Thought that he knew it. "This, I  
stay'd for this ;

O love, I have not seen you for so long.  
Now, now, will I go down into the grave,  
I will be all alone with all I love,

And kiss her on the lips. She is his no  
more :

The dead returns to me, and I go down  
To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so  
He rose and went, and entering the dim  
vault,

And, making there a sudden light, beheld  
All round about him that which all will be.  
The light was but a flash, and went again.

Then at the far end of the vault he saw  
His lady with the moonlight on her face ;  
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars  
Of black and bands of silver, which the  
moon

Struck from an open grating overhead  
High in the wall, and all the rest of her  
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the  
vault.

"It was my wish," he said, "to pass,  
to sleep,

To rest, to be with her — till the great day  
Peal'd on us with that music which  
rights all,

And raised us hand in hand." And  
kneeling there

Down in the dreadful dust that once  
was man,

Dust, as he said, that once was loving  
hearts,

Hearts that had beat with such a love  
as mine —

Not such as mine, no, nor for such as  
her —

He softly put his arm about her neck  
And kiss'd her more than once, till help-  
less death

And silence made him bold — nay, but  
I wrong him,

He revered his dear lady even in death ;  
But, placing his true hand upon her heart,  
"O, you warm heart," he moan'd,  
"not even death

Can chill you all at once" : then starting, thought  
 His dreams had come again. "Do I wake or sleep?  
 Or am I made immortal, or my love Mortal once more?" It beat — the heart — it beat :  
 Faint — but it beat : at which his own began  
 To pulse with such a vehemence that it drown'd  
 The feebler motion underneath his hand.  
 But when at last his doubts were satisfied, He raised her softly from the sepulchre, And, wrapping her all over with the cloak He came in, and now striding fast, and now Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore Holding his golden burden in his arms, So bore her thro' the solitary land Back to the mother's house where she was born.

There the good mother's kindly ministering,  
 With half a night's appliances, recall'd Her fluttering life : she rais'd an eye that ask'd  
 "Where?" till the things familiar to her youth  
 Had made a silent answer : then she spoke, "Here ! and how came I here?" and learning it  
 (They told her somewhat rashly as I think) At once began to wander and to wail,  
 "Ay, but you know that you must give me back :  
 Send ! bid him come" ; but Lionel was away —  
 Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew where.  
 "He casts me out," she wept, "and goes" — a wail  
 That seeming something, yet was nothing, born  
 Not from believing mind, but shatter'd nerve,  
 Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof At some precipitance in her burial.  
 Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,  
 "O yes, and you," she said, "and none but you.  
 For you have given me life and love again, And none but you yourself shall tell him of it,  
 And you shall give me back when he returns."

"Stay then a little," answer'd Julian, "here,  
 And keep yourself, none knowing, to yourself ;  
 And I will do your will. I may not stay, No, not an hour ; but send me notice of him  
 When he returns, and then will I return, And I will make a solemn offering of you To him you love." And faintly she replied, "And I will do *your* will, and none shall know."

Not know ? with such a secret to be known.  
 But all their house was old and loved them both,  
 And all the house had known the loves of both ;  
 Had died almost to serve them any way, And all the land was waste and solitary : And then he rode away ; but after this, An hour or two, Camilla's travail came Upon her, and that day a boy was born, Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away, And pausing at a hostel in a marsh, There fever seized upon him : myself was then  
 Travelling that land, and meant to rest an hour ;  
 And sitting down to such a base repast, It makes me angry yet to speak of it — I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd The moulder'd stairs (for everything was vile)  
 And in a loft, with none to wait on him, Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone, Raving of dead men's dust and beating hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land, A flat malarian world of reed and rush ! But there from fever and my care of him Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.  
 For while we roam'd along the dreary coast,  
 And waited for her message, piece by piece I learnt the drearier story of his life ;  
 And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel, Found that the sudden wail his lady made Dwelt in his fancy : did he know her worth, Her beauty even ? should he not be taught, Ev'n by the price that others set upon it, The value of that jewel he had to guard ?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,  
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,  
the soul :

*That makes the sequel pure; tho' some of us*  
Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
Not such am I : and yet I say, the bird  
That will not hear my call, however sweet,  
But if my neighbor whistle answers  
him —

What matter? there are others in the wood.  
Yet when I saw her (and I thought him  
crazed,

Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of  
hers —

Oh ! such dark eyes ! and not her eyes  
alone,

But all from these to where she touch'd  
on earth,

For such a craziness as Julian's seem'd  
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
To greet us, her young hero in her arms !  
" Kiss him," she said. " You gave me  
life again.

He, but for you, had never seen it once.  
His other father you ! Kiss him, and then  
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart !  
his own

Sent such a flame into his face, I knew  
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,  
And sent at once to Lionel, praying him  
By that great love they both had borne  
the dead,

To come and revel for one hour with him  
Before he left the land for evermore ;  
And then to friends — they were not  
many — who lived

Scatteringly about that lonely land of his,  
And bade them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast : I never  
Sat at a costlier ; for all round his hall  
From column on to column, as in a wood,  
Not such as here — an equatorial one,  
Great garlands swung and blossom'd ;  
and beneath,

Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,  
Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven  
knows when,

Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun  
And kept it thro' a hundred years a  
gloom,

Yet glowing in a heart of ruby — cups  
Where nymph and god ran ever round  
in gold —

Others of glass as costly — some with gems  
Movable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value — And  
heavens !

Why need I tell you all ? — suffice to say  
That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guest : and they,  
the guests,

Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's  
eyes

(I told you that he had his golden hour),  
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd  
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his,  
And that resolved self-exile from a land  
He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n  
than rich,

But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall  
Two great funereal curtains, looping down,  
Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
About a picture of his lady, taken  
Some years before, and falling hid the  
frame.

And just above the parting was a lamp :  
So the sweet figure folded round with night  
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a  
smile.

Well then — our solemn feast — we ate  
and drank,  
And might — the wines being of such  
nobleness —

Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
And something weird and wild about it  
all :

What was it ? for our lover seldom spoke,  
Scarce touch'd the meats ; but ever and  
anon

A priceless goblet with a priceless wine  
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use ;  
And when the feast was near an end, he  
said :

" There is a custom in the Orient,  
friends —  
I read of it in Persia — when a man  
Will honor those who feast with him, he  
brings



And shows them whatsoever he accounts  
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.  
This custom — ”

Pausing here a moment, all  
The guests broke in upon him with meet-  
ing hands  
And cries about the banquet — “ Beau-  
tiful !  
Who could desire more beauty at a feast ? ”

The lover answer'd, “ There is more  
than one  
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not  
Before my time, but hear me to the close.  
This custom steps yet further when the  
guest  
Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost.  
For after he has shown him gems or gold,  
He brings and sets before him in rich guise  
That which is thrice as beautiful as these,  
The beauty that is dearest to his heart —  
' O my heart's lord, would I could show  
you,' he says,  
' Ev'n my heart too.' And I propose to-  
night  
To show you what is dearest to my heart,  
And my heart too.

“ But solve me first a doubt.  
I knew a man, nor many years ago ;  
He had a faithful servant, one who loved  
His master more than all on earth beside.  
He falling sick, and seeming close on  
death,  
His master would not wait until he died,  
But bade his menials bear him from the  
door,  
And leave him in the public way to die.  
I knew another, not so long ago,  
Who found the dying servant, took him  
home,  
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved  
his life.  
I ask you now, should this first master  
claim  
His service, whom does it belong to ? him  
Who thrust him out, or him who saved  
his life ? ”

This question, so flung down before  
the guests,  
And balanced either way by each, at length  
When some were doubtful how the law  
would hold,  
Was handed over by consent of all  
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of  
phrase.  
And he beginning languidly — his loss  
Weigh'd on him yet — but warming as  
he went,  
Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,  
Affirming that as long as either lived,  
By all the laws of love and gratefulness,  
The service of the one so saved was due  
All to the saver — adding, with a smile,  
The first for many weeks — a semi-smile  
As at a strong conclusion — “ body and  
soul  
And life and limbs, all his to work his  
will.”

Then Julian made a secret sign to me  
To bring Camilla down before them all.  
And crossing her own picture as she came,  
And looking as much lovelier as herself  
Is lovelier than all others — on her head  
A diamond circlet, and from under this  
A veil, that seem'd no more than gilded  
air,

Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze  
With seeds of gold — so, with that grace  
of hers,

Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,  
That flings a mist behind it in the sun —  
And bearing high in arms the mighty  
babe,

The younger Julian, who himself was  
crown'd

With roses, none so rosy as himself —  
And over all her babe and her the jewels  
Of many generations of his house  
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked  
them out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love —  
So she came in : — I am long in telling it.  
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
Sad, sweet, and strange together — floated  
in, —

While all the guests in mute amazement  
rose, —

And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
Before the board, there paused and stood,  
her breast

Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,  
Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.

But him she carried, him nor lights nor  
feast

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ; who  
cared

Only to use his own, and staring wide  
And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd  
world

About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,  
When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

"My guests," said Julian : "you are  
honor'd now

Ev'n to the uttermost : in her behold  
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
Of all things upon earth the dearest to  
me."

Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,  
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.

And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face  
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,  
And heard him muttering, "So like, so  
like ;

She never had a sister. I knew none.  
Some cousin of his and hers — O God, so  
like !"

And then he suddenly ask'd her if she  
were.

She shook, and cast her eyes down, and  
was dumb.

And then some other question'd if she  
came

From foreign lands, and still she did not  
speak.

Another, if the boy were hers : but she  
To all their queries answer'd not a word,  
Which made the amazement more, till  
one of them

Said, shuddering, "Her spectre !" But  
his friend

Replied, in half a whisper, "Not at least  
The spectre that will speak if spoken to.  
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
dumb !"

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd  
all :

"She is but dumb, because in her you see  
That faithful servant whom we spoke  
about,

Obedient to her second master now ;  
Which will not last. I have here to-night  
a guest

So bound to me by common love and  
loss —

What ! shall I bind him more ? in his  
behalf,

Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him  
That which of all things is the dearest to  
me,

Not only showing ? and he himself pro-  
nounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

"Now all be dumb, and promise all  
of you

Not to break in on what I say by word  
Or whisper, while I show you all my  
heart."

And then began the story of his love  
As here to-day, but not so wordily —  
The passionate moment would not suffer  
that —

Past thro' his visions to the burial ; thence  
Down to this last strange hour in his own  
hall ;

And then rose up, and with him all his  
guests

Once more as by enchantment ; all but he,  
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,  
And sat as if in chains — to whom he said :

"Take my free gift, my cousin, for  
your wife ;

And were it only for the giver's sake,  
And tho' she seem so like the one you  
lost,

Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
Lest there be none left here to bring her  
back :

I leave this land forever." Here he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one hand,  
And bearing on one arm the noble babe,  
He slowly brought them both to Lionel.  
And there the widower husband and dead  
wife

Rush'd each at each with a cry, that rather  
seem'd

For some new death than for a life re-  
new'd ;

At this the very babe began to wail ;  
At once they turn'd, and caught and  
brought him in

To their charm'd circle, and, half-killing  
him

With kisses, round him closed and clasp'd  
again.

But Lionel, when at last he freed himself  
From wife and child, and lifted up a face  
All over glowing with the sun of life,  
And love, and boundless thanks — the  
sight of this

So frighted our good friend, that turning  
to me

And saying, "It is over : let us go" —  
There were our horses ready at the doors —  
We bade them no farewell, but mounting  
these

He past for ever from his native land ;  
And I with him, my Julian, back to mine.

## THE VICTIM.

## I.

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
 A famine after laid them low,  
 Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,  
 For on them brake the sudden foe ;  
 So thick they died the people cried  
 "The Gods are moved against the land."  
 The Priest in horror about his altar  
 To Thor and Odin lifted a hand :  
 "Help us from famine  
 And plague and strife !  
 What would you have of us ?  
 Human life ?  
 Were it our nearest,  
 Were it our dearest,  
 (Answer, O answer)  
 We give you his life."

## II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,  
 And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
 And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
 And whiten'd all the rolling flood ;  
 And dead men lay all over the way,  
 Or down in a furrow scathed with flame :  
 And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd  
 Till at last it seem'd that an answer  
     came :  
 "The King is happy  
 In child and wife ;  
 Take you his dearest,  
 Give us a life."

## III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill ;  
 The King was hunting in the wild ;  
 They found the mother sitting still ;  
 She cast her arms about the child.  
 The child was only eight summers old,  
 His beauty still with his years increased,  
 His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,  
 He seem'd a victim due to the priest.  
 The Priest beheld him,  
 And cried with joy,  
 "The Gods have answer'd :  
 We give them the boy."

## IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,  
 He bore but little game in hand ;  
 The mother said "They have taken the  
     child  
 To spill his blood and heal the land :

The land is sick, the people diseased,  
 And blight and famine on all the lea :  
 The holy Gods, they must be appeased,  
 So I pray you tell the truth to me.  
 They have taken our son,  
 They will have his life.  
 Is *he* your dearest ?  
 Or I, the wife ?"

## V.

The King bent low, with hand on brow,  
 He stay'd his arms upon his knee :  
 "O wife, what use to answer now ?  
 For now the Priest has judged for me."  
 The King was shaken with holy fear :  
 "The Gods," he said, "would have  
     chosen well ;  
 Yet both are near, and both are dear,  
 And which the dearest I cannot tell !"  
 But the Priest was happy,  
 His victim won :  
 "We have his dearest,  
 His only son !"

## VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,  
 The knife uprising toward the blow,  
 To the altar-stone she sprang alone,  
 "Me, not my darling, no !"  
 He caught her away with a sudden cry ;  
 Suddenly from him brake his wife,  
 And shrieking "*I* am his dearest, I —  
*I* am his dearest !" rush'd on the knife.  
 And the Priest was happy,  
 "O, Father Odin,  
 We give you a life.  
 Which was his nearest ?  
 Who was his dearest ?  
 The Gods have answer'd ;  
 We give them the wife !"

## WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory  
     of song,  
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost  
     on an endless sea —  
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to  
     right the wrong —  
 Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no  
     lover of glory she :  
 Give her the glory of going on, and still  
     to be.  
 The wages of sin is death : if the wages  
     of Virtue be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for  
the life of the worm and the fly?  
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet  
seats of the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask  
in a summer sky:  
Give her the wages of going on, and not  
to die.

### THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas,  
the hills and the plains —  
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him  
who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not  
that which He seems?  
Dreams are true while they last, and do  
we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of  
body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy di-  
vision from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the  
reason why;  
For is He not all but thou, that hast  
power to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou  
fulfillest thy doom,  
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled  
splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and  
Spirit with Spirit can meet —  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer  
than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and  
let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by law the thunder is  
yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all,  
says the fool;  
For all we have power to see is a straight  
staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the  
eye of man cannot see;  
But if we could see and hear, this Vision —  
were it not He?

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies; —  
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower — but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

### LUCRETIIUS.

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold; for when the morning  
flush

Of passion and the first embrace had died  
Between them, tho' he loved her none the  
less,

Yet often when the woman heard his foot  
Return from paces in the field, and ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master took  
Small notice, or austere, for — his mind  
Half buried in some weightier argument,  
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise  
And long roll of the Hexameter — he past  
To turn and ponder those three hundred  
scrolls

Left by the Teacher whom he held divine.  
She brook'd it not; but wrathful, pet-  
ulant,

Dreaming some rival, sought and found  
a witch

Who brew'd the philtre which had power,  
they said,

To lead an errant passion home again.

And this, at times, she mingled with his  
drink,

And this destroy'd him; for the wicked  
broth

Confused the chemic labor of the blood,  
And tickling the brute brain within the  
man's

Made havoc among those tender cells,  
and check'd

His power to shape: he loathed himself;  
and once

After a tempest woke upon a morn  
That mock'd him with returning calm,  
and cried;

"Storm in the night! for thrice I heard  
the rain

Rushing; and once the flash of a thunder-  
bolt —

Methought I never saw so fierce a fork —  
Struck out the streaming mountain-side,  
and show'd



A riotous confluence of watercourses  
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,  
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

"Storm, and what dreams, ye holy  
Gods, what dreams !  
For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Per-  
chance

We do but recollect the dreams that come  
Just ere the waking : terrible ! for it  
seem'd

A void was made in Nature ; all her bonds  
Crack'd ; and I saw the flaring atom-  
streams

And torrents of her myriad universe,  
Ruining along the illimitable inane,  
Fly on to clash together again, and make  
Another and another frame of things  
For ever : that was mine, my dream, I  
knew it —

Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
plies

His function of the woodland : but the  
next !

I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed  
Came driving rainlike down again on  
earth,

And where it dash'd the reddening  
meadow, sprang

No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,  
For these I thought my dream would  
show to me,

But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made  
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies  
worse

Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.  
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and  
round me drove

In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and  
saw —

Was it the first beam of my latest day ?

"Then, then, from utter gloom stood  
out the breasts,  
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a  
sword

Now over and now under, now direct,  
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down  
shamed

At all that beauty ; and as I stared, a  
fire,

The fire that left a roofless Ilium,  
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that  
I woke.

"Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,  
thine,  
Because I would not one of thine own  
doves,

Notev'n arose, were offer'd to thee ? thine,  
Forgetful how my rich procemion makes  
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
In lays that will outlast thy Deity ?

"Deity ? nay, thy worshippers. My  
tongue  
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of  
these

Angers thee most, or angers thee at all ?  
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof  
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and  
scorn,

Live the great life which all our greatest  
fain

Would follow, centred in eternal calm.

"Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like  
ourselves

Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry  
to thee

To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms  
Round him, and keep him from the lust  
of blood

That makes a steaming slaughter-house  
of Rome.

"Ay, but I meant not thee ; I meant  
not her,

Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see  
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and  
tempt

The Trojan, while his neat-herds were  
abroad ;

Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter  
wept

Her Deity false in human-amorous tears ;  
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter  
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,

Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
Calliope to grace his golden verse —

Ay, and this Kypris also — did I take  
That popular name of thine to shadow forth  
The all-generating powers and genial heat  
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the  
thick blood

Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs  
are glad

Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird  
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of  
flowers :

Which things appear the work of mighty  
Gods.

"The Gods ! and if I go *my* work is left  
Unfinish'd — *if* I go. The Gods, who  
haunt

The lucid interspace of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a  
wind,

Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar  
Their sacred everlasting calm ! and such,  
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain  
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the  
Gods !

If all be atoms, how then should the Gods  
Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
Not follow the great law ? My master held  
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.  
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant  
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train  
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
That Gods there are, and deathless.  
Meant ? I meant ?

I have forgotten what I meant : my mind  
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

"Look where another of our Gods, the  
Sun,

Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
All-seeing Hyperion — what you will —  
Has mounted yonder ; since he never  
sware,

Except his wrath were wreak'd on  
wretched man,

That he would only shine among the dead  
Hereafter ; tales ! for never yet on earth  
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-  
ing ox

Moan round the spit — nor knows he what  
he sees ;

King of the East altho' he seem, and girt  
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly  
lifts

His golden feet on those empurpled stairs  
That climb into the windy halls of heaven :  
And here he glances on an eye new-born,  
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain ;  
And here he stays upon a freezing orb  
That fain would gaze upon him to the last ;  
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n  
And closed by those who mourn a friend  
in vain,

Not thankful that his troubles are no more.  
And me, altho' his fire is on my face  
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell  
Whether I mean this day to end myself,  
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,

That men like soldiers may not quit the  
post.

Allotted by the Gods : but he that holds  
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he  
care

Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at  
once,

Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and  
sink

Past earthquake — ay, and gout and stone,  
that break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-  
life,

And wretched age — and worst disease  
of all,

These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,  
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,  
Abominable, strangers at my hearth  
Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,  
The phantom husks of something foully  
done,

And fleeing thro' the boundless universe,  
And blasting the long quiet of my breast  
With animal heat and dire insanity ?

"How should the mind, except it loved  
them, clasp

These idols to herself ? or do they fly  
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the  
flakes

In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce  
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour  
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear  
The keepers down, and throng, their rags  
and they,

The basest, far into that council-hall  
Where sit the best and stateliest of the  
land ?

"Can I not fling this horror off me again,  
Seeing with how great ease Nature can  
smile,

Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,  
At random ravage ? and how easily  
The mountain there has cast his cloudy  
slough,

Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
A mountain o'er a mountain, — ay, and  
within

All hollow as the hopes and fears of men ?

"But who was he, that in the garden  
snared

Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods ? a tale  
To laugh at — more to laugh at in my-  
self —

For look ! what is it ? there ? yon arbutus

Totters ; a noiseless riot underneath  
Strikes through the wood, sets all the  
tops quivering —

The mountain quickens into Nymph and  
Faun ;

And here an Oread — how the sun delights  
To glance and shift about her slippery  
sides,

And rosy knees and supple roundedness,  
And budded bosom-peaks — who this  
way runs

Before the rest — A satyr, a satyr, see,  
Follows ; but him I proved impossible ;  
Twy-natured is no nature : yet he draws  
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now  
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind  
That ever butted his rough brother-brute  
For lust or lusty blood or provender :

I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him ; and she  
Loathes him as well ; such a precipitate  
heel,

Eledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-  
wing,

Whirls her to me : but will she fling her-  
self,

Shameless upon me ? Catch her, goat-  
foot : nay,

Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilder-  
ness,

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide ! do  
I wish —

What ? — that the bush were leafless ?  
or to whelm

All of them in one massacre ? O ye Gods,  
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you  
From childly wont and ancient use I call —  
I thought I lived securely as yourselves —  
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-  
spite,

No madness of ambition, avarice, none :  
No larger feast than under plane or pine  
With neighbors laid along the grass, to  
take

Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,  
Affirming each his own philosophy —  
Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.

But now it seems some unseen monster  
lays

His vast and filthy hands upon my will,  
Wrenching it backward into his ; and  
spoils

My bliss in being ; and it was not great ;  
For save when shutting reasons up in  
rhythm,

Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
To make a truth less harsh, I often grew

Tired of so much within our little life,  
Or of so little in our little life —  
Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there  
an end —

And since the nobler pleasure seems to  
fade,

Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,  
Not manlike end myself ? — our privi-  
lege —

What beast has heart to do it ? And  
what man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in tri-  
umph thus ?

Not I ; not he, who bears one name with  
her

Whose death-blow struck the dateless  
doom of kings,

When, brooking not the Tarquin in her  
veins,

She made her blood in sight of Collatine  
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,  
Spout from the maiden fountain in her  
heart.

And from it sprang the Commonwealth,  
which breaks

As I am breaking now !

“ And therefore now  
Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,  
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart  
Those blind beginnings that have made  
me man

Dash them anew together at her will  
Through all her cycles — into man once  
more,

Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower :  
But till this cosmic order everywhere  
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day  
Cracks all to pieces, — and that hour per-  
haps

Is not so far when momentary man  
Shall seem no more a something to him-  
self,

But he, his hopes and hates, his homes  
and fanes,

And even his bones long laid within the  
grave,

The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,  
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,  
Into the unseen for ever, — till that hour,  
My golden work in which I told a truth  
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,  
and plucks

The mortal soul from out immortal hell,  
Shall stand : ay, surely : then it fails at last

And perishes as I must ; for O Thou,  
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,  
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art  
 Without one pleasure and without one  
     pain,  
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine  
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus  
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
 How roughly men may woo thee so they  
     win —  
 Thus — thus : the soul flies out and dies  
     in the air."

With that he drove the knife into his  
     side :  
 She heard him raging, heard him fall ;  
     ran in,  
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon her-  
     self  
 As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd  
 That she but meant to win him back, fell  
     on him,  
 Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd : he answer'd,  
     "Care not thou !  
 Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare thee  
     well !"

## IDYLLS OF THE KING.

"Flos Regum Arthurus."  
 JOSEPH OF EXETER.

### DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory — since he held  
     them dear,  
 Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
 Some image of himself — I dedicate,  
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —  
 These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
 Scarce other than my own ideal knight,  
 "Who revered his conscience as his  
     king ;  
 Whose glory was, redressing human  
     wrong ;  
 Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd  
     to it ;  
 Who loved one only and who clave to  
     her —"  
 Her — over all whose realms to their last  
     isle,  
 Commingled with the gloom of immi-  
     nent war,  
 The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,  
 Darkening the world. We have lost  
     him : he is gone :  
 We know him now : all narrow jealousies  
 Are silent ; and we see him as he moved,  
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,  
     wise,  
 With what sublime repression of himself,  
 And in what limits, and how tenderly ;  
 Not swaying to this faction or to that ;

Not making his high place the lawless  
     perch  
 Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
 For pleasure ; but thro' all this tract of  
     years  
 Wearing the white flower of a blameless  
     life,  
 Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
 In that fierce light which beats upon a  
     throne,  
 And blackens every blot : for where is he,  
 Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his ?  
 Or how should England dreaming of *his*  
     sons  
 Hopemore for these than some inheritance  
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
 Laborious for her people and her poor —  
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day —  
 Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace —  
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam  
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince in-  
     deed,  
 Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still  
     endure ;  
 Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
 Remembering all the beauty of that star



Which shone so close beside Thee, that  
 ye made  
 Oneligh together, but has past and leaves  
 The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,  
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow  
 Thee,  
 The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,  
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish  
 Thee,  
 The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,  
 Till God's love set Thee at his side again !

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,  
 Had one fair daughter, and none other  
 child ;  
 And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,  
 Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came  
 Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war  
 Each upon other, wasted all the land ;  
 And still from time to time the heathen  
 host

Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was  
 left.

And so there grew great tracts of wilder-  
 ness,

Wherein the beast was ever more and  
 more,

But man was less and less, till Arthur  
 came.

For first Aurelius lived and fought and  
 died,

And after him King Uther fought and  
 died,

But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.

And after these King Arthur for a space,  
 And thro' the puissance of his Table

Round,  
 Drew all their petty princedoms under  
 him,

Their king and head, and made a realm,  
 and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was  
 waste,

Thick with wet woods, and many a beast  
 therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the  
 beast ;

So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and  
 bear

Came night and day, and rooted in the  
 fields,

And wallow'd in the gardens of the king.  
 And ever and anon the wolf would steal  
 The children and devour, but now and  
 then,

Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce  
 teat

To human sucklings ; and the children,  
 housed

In her foul den, there at their meat would  
 growl,

And mock their foster-mother on four feet,  
 Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-  
 like men,

Worse than the wolves. And King Leodo-  
 gran

Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,  
 And Cæsar's eagle : then his brother king,  
 Rience, assail'd him : last a heathen horde,  
 Reddening the sun with smoke and earth  
 with blood,

And on the spike that split the mother's  
 heart

Spitting the child, brake on him, till,  
 amazed,

He knew not whither he should turn for  
 aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly  
 crown'd,

Tho' not without an uproar made by those  
 Who cried, " He is not Uther's son "—

the king

Sent to him, saying, " Arise, and help  
 us thou !

For here between the man and beast we  
 die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed of  
 arms,

But heard the call, and came : and Guin-  
 evere

Stood by the castle walls to watch him  
 pass ;

But since he neither wore on helm or  
 shield

The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
 But rode a simple knight among his

knight,

And many of these in richer arms than he,  
 Shesaw him not, or mark'd not, if shesaw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare.  
 But Arthur, looking downward as he past,

Felt the light of her eyes into his life  
 Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and  
 pitch'd

His tents beside the forest. And he drave  
The heathen, and he slew the beast, and  
fell'd  
The forest, and let in the sun, and made  
Broad pathways for the hunter and the  
knight ;  
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,  
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts  
Of those great Lords and Barons of his  
realm  
Flash'd forth and into war : for most of  
these  
Made head against him, crying, " Who  
is he  
That he should rule us ? who hath proven  
him,  
King Uther's son ? for lo ! we look at him  
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor  
voice,  
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.  
This is the son of Gorlois, not the king ;  
This is the son of Anton, not the king."

And Arthur, passing thence to battle,  
felt  
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,  
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere ;  
And thinking as he rode, " Her father  
said  
That there between the man and beast  
they die.  
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts  
Up to my throne, and side by side with  
me ?  
What happiness to reign a lonely king,  
Vext — O ye stars that shudder over me,  
O earth that soundest hollow under me,  
Vext with waste dreams ? for saving I be  
join'd  
To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
And cannot will my will, nor work my  
work  
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own  
realm  
Victor and lord. But were I join'd with  
her,  
Then might we live together as one life,  
And reigning with one will in everything  
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,  
And power on this dead world to make it  
live."

And Arthur from the field of battlesent  
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,

His new-made knights, to King Leodo-  
gran,  
Saying, " If I in aught have served thee  
well,  
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife."

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in  
heart  
Debating — " How should I that am a  
king,  
However much he help me at my need,  
Give my one daughter saving to a king,  
And a king's son " — lifted his voice, and  
call'd  
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom  
He trusted all things, and of him required  
His counsel : " Knowest thou aught of  
Arthur's birth ?"

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and  
said,  
" Sir king, there be but two old men that  
know :  
And each is twice as old as I ; and one  
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served  
King Uther thro' his magic art ; and one  
Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleys,  
Who taught him magic ; but the scholar  
ran  
Before the master, and so far, that Bleys  
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and  
wrote  
All things and whatsoever Merlin did  
In one great annal-book, where after-years  
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's  
birth."

To whom the King Leodogran replied,  
" O friend, had I been holpen half as well  
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,  
Then beaſt and man had had their share  
of me :  
But ſummon here before us yet once more  
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere."

Then, when they came before him, the  
king ſaid,  
" I have ſeen the cuckoo chas'd by leſſer  
fowl,  
And reaſon in the chaſe : but wherefore  
now  
Do theſe your lords ſtir up the heat of  
war,  
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,  
Others of Anton ? Tell me, ye yourſelves,  
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's  
ſon ?"

And Ulfus and Brastias answer'd,  
 "Ay."

Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights  
 Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,  
 spake —

For bold in heart and act and word was he,  
 Whenever slander breathed against the  
 king —

"Sir, there be many rumors on this  
 head :

For there be those who hate him in their  
 hearts,

Call him baseborn, and since his ways  
 are sweet,

And theirs are bestial, hold him less than  
 man :

And there be those who deem him more  
 than man,

And dream he dropt from heaven : but my  
 belief

In all this matter — so ye care to learn —  
 Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time  
 The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that  
 held

Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
 Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne :  
 And daughters had she borne him, — one  
 whereof,

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,  
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
 To Arthur, — but a son she had not borne.

And Uther cast upon her eyes of love :  
 But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,  
 So loathed the bright dishonor of his love,  
 That Gorlois and King Uther went to war :  
 And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.

Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged  
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,  
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their  
 walls,

Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,  
 And there was none to call to but himself.  
 So, compass'd by the power of the king,  
 Enforc'd she was to wed him in her tears,  
 And with a shameful swiftness; afterward,  
 Not many moons, King Uther died him-  
 self,

Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule  
 After him, lest the realm should go to  
 wrack.

And that same night, the night of the  
 new year,

By reason of the bitterness and grief  
 That vext his mother, all before his time  
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born  
 Deliver'd at a secret postern gate

To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
 Until his hour should come ; because the  
 lords

Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,  
 Wild beasts, and surely would have torn  
 the child

Piecemeal among them, had they known;  
 for each

But sought to rule for his own self and  
 hand,

And many hated Uther for the sake  
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the  
 child,

And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight  
 And ancient friend of Uther ; and his wife  
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him  
 with her own ;

And no man knew. And ever since the  
 lords

Have foughten like wild beasts among  
 themselves,

So that the realm has gone to wrack :  
 but now,

This year, when Merlin (for his hour had  
 come)

Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the  
 hall,

Proclaiming, ' Here is Uther's heir, your  
 king,'

A hundred voices cried, ' Away with him !  
 No king of ours ! a son of Gorlois he,  
 Or else the child of Anton, and no king,  
 Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro' his  
 craft,

And while the people clamor'd for a king,  
 Had Arthur crown'd ; but after, the great  
 lords

Banded, and so brake out in open war."

Then while the king debated with him-  
 self

If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,  
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,  
 Or Uther's son, and born before his time,  
 Or whether there were truth in anything  
 Said by these three, there came to Came-  
 liard,

With Gawain and young Modred, her two  
 sons,

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-  
 cent ;

Whom as he could, not as he would, the  
 king

Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat,

" A doubtful throne is ice on summer  
 seas —

Ye come from Arthur's court : think ye  
 this king —  
 So few his knights, however brave they  
 be —  
 Hath body enow to beat his foemen  
 down?"

"O king," she cried, "and I will tell  
 thee : few,  
 Few, but all brave, all of one mind with  
 him ;  
 For I was near him when the savage yells  
 Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat  
 Crown'd on the daïs, and his warriors  
 cried,  
 ' Be thou the king, and we will work thy  
 will  
 Who love thee.' Then the king in low  
 deep tones,  
 And simple words of great authority,  
 Bound them by so strait vows to his own  
 self,  
 That when they rose, knighted from  
 kneeling, some  
 Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
 Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one  
 who wakes  
 Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

"But when he spake and cheer'd his  
 Table Round  
 With large divine and comfortable words  
 Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I beheld  
 From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash  
 A momentary likeness of the king :  
 And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross  
 And those around it and the Crucified,  
 Down from the casement over Arthur,  
 smote  
 Flame-color, vert and azure, in three rays,  
 One falling upon each of three fair queens,  
 Who stood in silence near his throne, the  
 friends  
 Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright  
 Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

"And there I saw mage Merlin, whose  
 vast wit  
 And hundred winters are but as the hands  
 Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

"And near him stood the Lady of the  
 Lake,  
 Who knows a subtler magic than his  
 own —  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
 ful.

She gave the king his huge cross-hilted  
 sword,  
 Whereby to drive the heathen out : a mist  
 Of incense curl'd about her, and her face  
 Wellnigh was hidden in the minster  
 gloom ;  
 But there was heard among the holy  
 hymns  
 A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
 Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever storms  
 May shake the world, and when the sur-  
 face rolls,  
 Hath power to walk the waters like our  
 Lord.

"There likewise I beheld Excalibur  
 Before him at his crowning borne, the  
 sword  
 That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
 And Arthur row'd across and took it —  
 rich  
 With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
 Bewildering heart and eye — the blade  
 so bright  
 That men are blinded by it — on one side,  
 Graven in the oldest tongue of all this  
 world,  
 'Take me,' but turn the blade and you  
 shall see,  
 And written in the speech ye speak your-  
 self,  
 'Cast me away !' And sad was Arthur's  
 face  
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,  
 'Take thou and strike ! the time to cast  
 away  
 Is yet far-off.' So this great brand the king  
 Took, and by this will beat his foemen  
 down."

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but  
 thought  
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,  
 Fixing full eyes of question on her face,  
 "The swallow and the swift are near akin,  
 But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
 Being his own dear sister" ; and she said,  
 "Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am  
 I" ;  
 "And therefore Arthur's sister," ask'd  
 the King.  
 She answer'd, "These be secret things,"  
 and sign'd  
 To those two sons to pass and let them be.  
 And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying  
 hair,



Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw :  
 But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,  
 And there half heard ; the same that after-  
 ward  
 Struck for the throne, and striking found  
 his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,  
 "What know I ?  
 For dark my mother was in eyes and  
 hair,  
 And dark in hair and eyes am I ; and dark  
 Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther  
 too,  
 Wellnigh to blackness ; but this king is  
 fair  
 Beyond the race of Britons and of men.  
 Moreover always in my mind I hear  
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
 'O that ye had some brother, pretty one,  
 To guard thee on the rough ways of the  
 world.'"

"Ay," said the King, "and hear ye  
 such a cry ?  
 But when did Arthur chance upon thee  
 first ?"

"O king !" she cried, "and I will tell  
 thee true :  
 He found me first when yet a little maid :  
 Beaten I had been for a little fault  
 Whereof I was not guilty ; and out I ran  
 And flung myself down on a bank of heath,  
 And hated this fair world and all therein,  
 And wept, and wish'd that I were dead ;  
 and he —  
 I know not whether of himself he came,  
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can  
 walk  
 Unseen at pleasure — he was at my side,  
 And spake sweet words, and comforted  
 my heart,  
 And dried my tears, being a child with me.  
 And many a time he came, and evermore  
 As I grew greater grew with me ; and sad  
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him  
 was I,  
 Stern too at times, and then I loved him  
 not,  
 But sweet again, and then I loved him well.  
 And now of late I see him less and less,  
 But those first days had golden hours for  
 me,  
 For then I surely thought he would be  
 king.

"But let me tell thee now another tale :  
 For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they  
 say,  
 Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
 To hear him speak before he left his life.  
 Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the  
 mage,  
 And when I enter'd told me that himself  
 And Merlin ever served about the king,  
 Uther, before he died, and on the night  
 When Uther in Tintagil past away  
 Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two  
 Left the still king, and passing forth to  
 breathe,  
 Then from the castle gateway by the chasm  
 Descending thro' the dismal night — a  
 night  
 In which the bounds of heaven and earth  
 were lost —  
 Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps  
 It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape  
 thereof  
 A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern  
 Bright with a shining people on the decks,  
 And gone as soon as seen. And then the  
 two  
 Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great  
 sea fall,  
 Wave after wave, each mightier than the  
 last,  
 Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the  
 deep  
 And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged  
 Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame :  
 And down the wave and in the flame was  
 borne  
 A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,  
 Who stooped and caught the babe, and  
 cried 'The King !  
 Here is an heir for Uther !' And the fringe  
 Of that great breaker, sweeping up the  
 strand,  
 Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,  
 And all at once all round him rose in fire,  
 So that the child and he were clothed in  
 fire.  
 And presently thereafter follow'd calm,  
 Free sky and stars : 'And this same  
 child,' he said,  
 'Is he who reigns ; nor could I part in  
 peace  
 Till this were told.' And saying this the  
 seer  
 Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass  
 of death,  
 Not ever to be question'd any more  
 Save on the further side ; but when I met

Merlin, and ask'd him if these things  
were truth —

The shining dragon and the naked child  
Descending in the glory of the seas —  
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me  
In riddling triplets of old time, and said :

“Rain, rain, and sun ! a rainbow in  
the sky !

A young man will be wiser by and by ;  
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

Rain, rain, and sun ! a rainbow on the  
lea !

And truth is this to me, and that to thee ;  
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain ! and the free bloss-  
som blows :

Sun, rain, and sun ! and where is he who  
knows ?

From the great deep to the great deep he  
goes.

“So Merlin riddling anger'd me ; but  
thou

Fear not to give this king thine only child,  
Guinevere : so great bards of him will sing  
Hereafter ; and dark sayings from of old  
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of  
men,

And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
For comfort after their wage-work is done,  
Speak of the king ; and Merlin in our time  
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn  
Tho' men may wound him that he will  
not die,

But pass, again to come ; and then or now  
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
Till these and all men hail him for their  
king.”

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,  
But musing “Shall I answer yea or nay ?”  
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept,  
and saw,

Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,  
Field after field, up to a height, the peak  
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom  
king,

Now looming, and now lost ; and on the  
slope

The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd  
was driven,

Fire glimpsed ; and all the land from  
roof and rick,

In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,  
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with  
the haze

And made it thicker ; while the phantom  
king

Sent out at times a voice ; and here or  
there

Stood one who pointed toward the voice,  
the rest

Slew on and burnt, crying, “No king of  
ours,

No son of Uther, and no king of ours” ;  
Till with a wink his dream was changed,  
the haze

Descended, and the solid earth became  
As nothing, and the king stood out in  
heaven,

Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent  
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom  
he loved

And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride  
forth

And bring the Queen ; — and watch'd  
him from the gates :

And Lancelot past away among the  
flowers,

(For then was latter April) and return'd  
Among the flowers, in May, with Guin-  
evere.

To whom arrived, by Dubric the high  
saint,

Chief of the church in Britain, and before  
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the king  
That morn was married, while in stain-  
less white,

The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
And glorying in their vows and him,  
his knights

Stood round him, and rejoicing in his  
joy.

And holy Dubric spread his hands and  
spake,

“Reign ye, and live and love, and make  
the world

Other, and may thy Queen be one with  
thee,

And all this Order of thy Table Round  
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their  
king.”

Then at the marriage feast came in  
from Rome,

The slowly-fading mistress of the world,  
Great lords, who claim'd the tribute as  
of yore.

But Arthur spake, “Behold, for these  
have sworn

To fight my wars, and worship me their  
king ;  
The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new ;  
And we that fight for our fair father Christ,  
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old  
To drive the heathen from your Roman  
wall,  
No tribute will we pay" : so those great  
lords  
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove  
with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a  
space  
Were all one will, and thro' that strength  
the king  
Drew in the petty princedoms under him,  
Fought, and in twelve great battles  
overcame  
The heathen hordes, and made a realm  
and reign'd.

## GERAINT AND ENID.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's  
court,

A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great order of the Table Round,  
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her, as he loved the light of  
Heaven.

And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
With moon and trembling stars, so loved  
Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day,  
In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
And Enid, but to please her husband's  
eye,  
Who first had found and loved her in a  
state

Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendor ; and the Queen  
herself,

Grateful to Prince Geraint for service  
done,

Loved her, and often with her own white  
hands

Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
Next after her own self, in all the court.  
And Enid loved the Queen, and with  
true heart

Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
And seeing them so tender and so close,

Long in their common love rejoiced  
Geraint.

But when a rumor rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet  
was heard

The world's loud whisper breaking into  
storm,

Not less Geraint believed it ; and there fell  
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,  
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
In nature : wherefore going to the king,  
He made this pretext, that his princedom  
lay

Close on the borders of a territory,  
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff  
knights,

Assassins, and all fliers from the hand  
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law :  
And therefore, till the king himself should  
please

To cleanse this common sewer of all his  
realm,

He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches ; and the  
king

Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them, to  
the shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own land ;  
Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the king,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his princedom and its cares.  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.  
And by and by the people, when they met  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,  
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's  
eyes :

This too the woman who attired her head,  
To please her, dwelling on his boundless  
love,

Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the  
more :

And day by day she thought to tell  
Geraint,

But could not out of bashful delicacy ;





Enid.

While he that watch'd her sadden, was  
the more  
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last it chanced that on a summer  
morn  
(They sleeping each by either) the new sun  
Beat thro' the blindless casement of the  
room,  
And heated the strong warrior in his  
dreams ;  
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his  
throat,

The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle  
sloped,

As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within her-  
self,

Was ever man so grandly made as he ?  
Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk  
And accusation of uxoriousness  
Across her mind, and bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said :

"O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Reproach you, saying all your force is  
gone ?

I *am* the cause because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they  
say.

And yet I hate that he should linger here ;  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
Far liever had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mightful hand striking  
great blows

At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
And darken'd from the high light in his  
eyes,

Than that my lord thro' me should suffer  
shame.

Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,  
Or maybe pierced to death before mine  
eyes,

And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force



Is melted into mere effeminacy ?  
O me, I fear that I am no true wife."

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her  
weep  
True tears upon his broad and naked  
breast,  
And these awoke him, and by great mis-  
chance

He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.  
And then he thought, "In spite of all my  
care,

For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains,  
She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's  
hall."

Then tho' he loved and revered her  
too much

To dream she could be guilty of foul act,  
Right thro' his manful breast darted the  
pang

That makes a man, in the sweet face of her  
Whom he loves most, lonely and misera-  
ble.

At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed,  
And shook his drowsy squire awake and  
cried,

"My charger and her palfrey," then to her,  
"I will ride forth into the wilderness ;  
For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,  
I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.  
And you, put on your worst and meanest  
dress

And ride with me." And Enid ask'd,  
amazed,

"If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault."  
But he, "I charge you, ask not but obey."  
Then she bethought her of a faded silk,  
A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
Wherein she kept them folded reverently  
With sprigs of summer laid between the  
folds,

She took them, and array'd herself therein,  
Remembering when first he came on her  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
her in it,

And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey to her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the  
court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before  
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,

Before him came a forester of Dean,  
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart  
Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,  
First seen that day : these things he told  
the king.

Then the good king gave order to let blow  
His horns for hunting on the morrow  
morn.

And when the Queen petition'd for his  
leave

To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
So with the morning all the court were  
gone.

But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of  
her love

For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt ;  
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd  
the wood ;

There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
Waiting to hear the hounds ; but heard  
instead

A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince  
Geraint,

Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow  
ford

Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
In summer suit and silks of holiday.

Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,  
Sweetly and statelily, and with all grace  
Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd  
him :

"Late, late, Sir Prince," she said, "later  
than we !"

"Yea, noble Queen," he answer'd, "and  
so late

That I but come like you to see the hunt,  
Not join it." "Therefore wait with me,"  
she said ;

"For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
There is good chance that we shall hear  
the hounds :

Here often they break covert at our feet."

And while they listen'd for the distant  
hunt,

And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth,  
there rode

Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf ;

Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight

Had visor up, and show'd a youthful face,  
Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
In the king's hall, desired his name, and sent

Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;  
Who being vicious, old, and irritable,  
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
Made answer sharply that she should not know.

"Then will I ask it of himself," she said.  
"Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not," cried the dwarf;

"Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him";

And when she put her horse toward the knight,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd

Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint  
Exclaiming, "Surely I will learn the name,"

Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,

Who answer'd as before; and when the Prince

Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,

Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.

The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand  
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:

But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
And pure nobility of temperament,  
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd

From ev'n a word, and so returning said:

"I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
Done in your maiden's person to yourself:  
And I will track this vermin to their earths:

For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
To find, at some place I shall come at, arms  
On loan, or else for pledge; and, being found,

Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,

And on the third day, will again be here,  
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell."

"Farewell, fair Prince," answer'd the stately Queen.

"Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;

And may ye light on all things that ye love,

And live to wed with her whom first ye love:

But ere ye wed with any, bring your bride,

And I, were she the daughter of a king,  
Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,  
Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy glade

And valley, with fixt eye following the three.

At last they issued from the world of wood,  
And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.

And thither came Geraint, and underneath

Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley, on one side whereof,  
White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose;

And on one side a castle in decay,  
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine:  
And out of town and valley came a noise  
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks  
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,  
And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.

"So," thought Geraint, "I have track'd him to his earth."

And down the long street riding wearily,  
Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss  
And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd

His master's armor; and of such a one  
He ask'd, "What means the tumult in the town?"

Who told him, scouring still "The spar-row-hawk!"

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,  
Ask'd yet once more what meant the hub-bub here?



"Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley."

Who answer'd gruffly, Ugh ! the spar-  
row-hawk."

Then riding further past an armorer's,  
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above  
his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
He put the self-same query, but the man  
Not turning round, nor looking at him,  
said :

"Friend, ne that labors for the sparrow-  
hawk

Has little time for idle questioners."

Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden  
spleen :

"A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-  
hawk !

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck  
him dead !

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
The murmur of the world ! What is it  
to me ?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,  
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-  
hawks !

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-  
mad,

Where can I get me harborage for the  
night ?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy ?  
Speak !"

At this the armorer turning all amazed  
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,



Came forward with the helmet yet in hand  
And answer'd, "Pardon me, O stranger knight ;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,  
And there is scanty time for half the work.  
Arms? truth! I know not : all are wanted here.

Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge  
Yonder." He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,  
Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,  
(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,  
Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said :  
"Whither, fair son?" to whom Geraint replied,

"O friend, I seek a harborage for the night."

Then Yniol, "Enter therefore and partake  
The slender entertainment of a house  
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd."

"Thanks, venerable friend," replied Geraint ;

"So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawk

For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast."

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed Earl,

And answer'd, "Graver cause than yours is mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk :

But in, go in ; for save yourself desire it,  
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest."

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,  
His charger trampling many a prickly star  
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.  
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern ;

And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,  
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,

And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers :

And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent,  
wound

Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,

And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd

A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the Hall,  
Singing ; and as the sweet voice of a bird,

Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is

That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form ;  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint ;  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men

Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,

And he suspends his converse with a friend,

Or it may be the labor of his hands,  
To think or say, "there is the nightingale" ;

So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,

"Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me."

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one

Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang :

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud ;

Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud ;

Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown ;

With that wild wheel we go not up or down ;  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands ;

Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands ;

For man is man and master of his fate.



“Turn, turn thy wheel above the  
staring crowd ;  
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the  
cloud ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
hate.”

“Hark, by the bird’s song you may  
learn the nest”  
Said Yniol ; “Enter quickly.” Enter-  
ing then,  
Right o’er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky-rafter’d many-cobweb’d Hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim bro-  
cade ;  
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-  
white,

That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought  
Geraint,

“Here by God’s rood is the one maid for  
me.”

But none spake word except the hoary  
Earl :

“Enid, the good knight’s horse stands in  
the court ;

Take him to stall, and give him corn,  
and then

Go to the town and buy us flesh and  
wine ;

And we will make us merry as we may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
great.”



“In a moment thought Geraint,  
‘Here by God’s rood is the one maid for me.’”

He spake : the Prince, as Enid past  
him, fain

To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught  
His purple scarf, and held, and said  
“Forbear!

Rest! the good house, tho’ ruin’d, O my  
Son,

Endures not that her guest should serve  
himself.”

And reverencing the custom of the house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall ;  
And after went her way across the bridge,  
And reach’d the town, and while the  
Prince and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again with one,  
A youth, that following with a costrel bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and  
wine.

And Enid brought sweet cakes to make  
them cheer,

And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.  
And then, because their hall must also  
serve

For kitchen, boil’d the flesh, and spread  
the board,

And stood behind, and waited on the three.  
And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it down :  
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his  
veins,

Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Nowhere, now there, about the dusky hall ;  
Then suddenly address the hoary Earl :

“Fair Host and Earl, I pray your courtesy ;  
This sparrow-hawk, what is he, tell me  
of him.

His name ? but no, good faith, I will not  
have it :

For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
White from the mason’s hand, then have  
I sworn

From his own lips to have it—I am  
Geraint

Of Devon—for this morning when the  
Queen

Sent her own maiden to demand the name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she re-  
turn’d

Indignant to the Queen ; and then I swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and have  
it of him.

And all unarm’d I rode, and thought to find  
Arms in your town, where all the men  
are mad ;

They take the rustic murmur of their bourg  
For the great wave that echoes round the  
world ;

They would not hear me speak : but if  
ye know

Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have  
sworn

That I will break his pride and learn his  
name,

Avenging this great insult done the  
Queen.”

Then cried Earl Yniol. “Art thou he  
indeed,

Geraint, a name far-sounded among men  
For noble deeds ? and truly I, when first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt you were somewhat, yea and by  
your state

And presence might have guess’d you one  
of those

That eat in Arthur’s hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery ;  
For this dear child hath often heard me  
praise

Your feats of arms, and often when I  
paused

Hath ask’d again, and ever loved to hear ;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong :  
O never yet had woman such a pair

Of suitors as this maiden ; first Limours,  
A creature wholly given to brawls and  
wine,

Drunk even when he woo’d ; and be he  
dead

I know not, but he past to the wild land.  
The second was your foe, the sparrow-  
hawk,

My curse, my nephew—I will not let  
his name

Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,  
When I that knew him fierce and turbu-  
lent

Refused her to him, then his pride awoke ;  
And since the proud man often is the  
mean,

He sow’d a slander in the common ear,  
Affirming that his father left him gold,

And in my charge, which was not rendered to him ;

Bribed with large promises the men who served

About my person, the more easily  
Because my means were somewhat broken into

Thro' open doors and hospitality ;  
Raised my own town against me in the night

Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my house ;

From mine own earldom foully ousted me ;  
Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
For truly there are those who love me yet ;  
And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
Where doubtless he would put me soon to death,

But that his pride too much despises me :  
And I myself sometimes despise myself ;  
For I have let men be, and have their way ;  
Am much too gentle, have not used my power :

Nor know I whether I be very base  
Or very manful, whether very wise  
Or very foolish ; only this I know,  
That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
But can endure it all most patiently."

"Well said, true heart," replied Geraint, "but arms :  
That if the sparrow-hawk, this nephew, fight,  
In next day's tourney I may break his pride."

And Yniol answer'd "Arms, indeed, but old  
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
Are mine, and therefore at your asking, yours.

But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
Except the lady he loves best be there.  
Two forks are fixt into the meadow ground,  
And over these is laid a silver wand,  
And over that is placed the sparrow-hawk,  
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.  
And this, what knight soever be in field  
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,  
Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
And toppling over all antagonism  
Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-hawk.

But you, that have no lady, cannot fight."

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright replied,

Leaning a little toward him, "Your leave !

Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
For this dear child, because I never saw,  
Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
And if I fall her name will yet remain  
Untarnish'd as before ; but if I live,  
So aid me Heaven when at mine uttermost,

As I will make her truly my true wife."

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.  
And looking round he saw not Enid there,  
(Who hearing her own name had slept away)

But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
And fondling all her hand in his he said,  
"Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her understood.  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the Prince."

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and she

With frequent smile and nod departing found,

Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl ;  
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek, and then

On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,  
And told her all their converse in the hall,

Proving her heart : but never light and shade

Coursed one another more on open ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and pale

Across the face of Enid hearing her ;  
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by grain,  
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast ;

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it ;  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness ;  
And when the pale and bloodless east began

To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised



Her mother too, and hand in hand they  
 moved  
 Down to the meadow where the jousts  
 were held,  
 And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when  
 Geraint  
 Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
 He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,  
 Himself beyond the rest pushing could  
 move

The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
 Were on his princely person, but thro'  
 these

Princelike his bearing shone ; and errant  
 knights

And ladies came, and by and by the town  
 Flow'd in, and settling circled all the  
 lists.

And there they fixt the forks into the  
 ground,

And over these they placed a silver wand  
 And over that a golden sparrow-hawk.

Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet  
 blown,

Spake to the lady with him and pro-  
 claim'd,

"Advance and take as fairest of the fair,  
 For I these two years past have won it  
 for thee,

The prize of beauty." Loudly spake the  
 Prince,

"Forbear : there is a worthier," and the  
 knight

With some surprise and thrice as much  
 disdain

Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his  
 face

Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at  
 Yule,

So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
 "Do battle for it then," no more ; and  
 thrice

They clash'd together, and thrice they  
 brake their spears.

Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd  
 at each

So often and with such blows, that all  
 the crowd

Wonder'd, and now and then from dis-  
 tant walls

There came a clapping as of phantom  
 hands.

So twice they fought, and twice they  
 breathed, and still

The dew of their great labor, and the blood

Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd  
 their force.

But either's force was match'd till Yniol's  
 cry,

"Remember that great insult done the  
 Queen,"

Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade  
 aloft,

And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit  
 the bone,

And fell'd him, and set foot upon his  
 breast,

And said, "Thy name?" To whom the  
 fallen man

Made answer, groaning, "Edyrn, son of  
 Nudd !

Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
 My pride is broken : men have seen my  
 fall."

"Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd," replied  
 Geraint,

"These two things shalt thou do, or else  
 thou diest.

First, thou thyself, thy lady, and thy  
 dwarf,

Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and being  
 there,

Crave pardon for that insult done the  
 Queen,

And shalt abide her judgment on it ; next,  
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy  
 kin.

These two things shalt thou do, or thou  
 shalt die."

And Edyrn answer'd, "These things will  
 I do,

For I have never yet been overthrown,  
 And thou hast overthrown me, and my  
 pride

Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall !"  
 And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,  
 And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
 And being young, he changed, and came  
 to loathe

His crime of traitor, slowly drew himself  
 Bright from his old dark life, and fell at  
 last

In the great battle fighting for the king.

But when the third day from the hunt-  
 ing-morn

Made a low splendor in the world, and  
 wings

Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow  
 light,

Among the dancing shadows of the birds,



Woke and bethought her of her promise  
given

No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
He would not leave her, till her promise  
given—

To ride with him this morning to the court,  
And there be made known to the stately  
Queen,

And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
And thought it never yet had look'd so  
mean.

For as a leaf in mid-November is  
To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
The dress that now she look'd on to the  
dress

She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
And still she look'd, and still the terror  
grew

Of that strange bright and dreadful thing,  
a court,

All staring at her in her faded silk :  
And softly to her own sweet heart she said :

“This noble prince who won our earl-  
dom back,

So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit  
him !

Would he could tarry with us here awhile !  
But being so beholden to the Prince,  
It were but little grace in any of us,  
Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
To seek a second favor at his hands.

Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
Myself would work eye dim, and finger  
lame,

Far liefer than so much discredit him.”

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a  
costly gift

Of her good mother, given her on the night  
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd  
their house,

And scatter'd all they had to all the winds :  
For while the mother show'd it, and the  
two

Were turning and admiring it, the work  
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
That Edyrn's men were on them, and  
they fled

With little save the jewels they had on,  
Which being sold and sold had bought  
them bread :

And Edyrn's men had caught them in  
their flight,

And placed them in this ruin ; and she  
wish'd

The Prince had found her in her ancient  
home ;

Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
And roam the goodly places that she knew ;  
And last bethought her how she used to  
watch,

Near that old home, a pool of golden carp ;  
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and  
lustreless

Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool ;  
And half asleep she made comparison

Of that and these to her own faded self  
And the gay court, and fell asleep again ;

And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool ;

But this was in the garden of a king ;  
And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew

That all was bright ; that all about were  
birds

Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;  
That all the turf was rich in plots that  
look'd

Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;  
And lords and ladies of the high court  
went

In silver tissue talking things of state ;  
And children of the king in cloth of gold

Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down  
the walks ;

And while she thought “they will not  
see me,” came

A stately queen whose name was Guine-  
vere,

And all the children in their cloth of gold  
Ran to her, crying, “if we have fish at all  
Let them be gold ; and charge the gar-  
deners now

To pick the faded creature from the pool,  
And cast it on the mixen that it die.”

And therewithal one came and seized on  
her,

And Enid started waking, with her heart  
All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,

And lo ! it was her mother grasping her  
To get her well awake ; and in her hand

A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly :

“See here, my child, how fresh the  
colors look,

How fast they hold like colors of a shell  
That keeps the wear and polish of the  
wave.

Why not ? it never yet was worn, I trow :  
Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know  
it."

And Enid look'd, but all confused at  
first,  
Could scarce divide it from her foolish  
dream :

Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,  
And answer'd, "Yea, I know it ; your  
good gift,

So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;  
Your own good gift !" "Yea, surely,"  
said the dame,

"And gladly given again this happy morn.  
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,  
Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-  
where

He found the sack and plunder of our house  
All scatter'd thro' the houses of the  
town ;

And gave command that all which once  
was ours,

Should now be ours again : and yester-eve,  
While you were talking sweetly with your  
Prince

Came one with this and laid it in my hand,  
For love or fear, or seeking favor of us,  
Because we have our earldom back again.  
And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,  
But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.  
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?

For I myself unwillingly have worn  
My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,  
And howsoever patient, Yniol his.

Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,  
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,  
And page, and maid, and squire, and  
seneschal,

And pastime both of hawk and hound,  
and all

That appertains to noble maintenance.  
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house ;  
But since our fortune slipt from sun to  
shade,

And all thro' that young traitor, cruel  
need

Constrain'd us, but a better time has come ;  
So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride :  
For tho' ye won the prize of fairest fair,  
And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
Let never maiden think, however fair,  
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.  
And should some great court-lady say,  
the Prince

Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,

And like a madman brought her to the  
court,

Then were ye shamed, and, worse, might  
shame the Prince

To whom we are beholden ; but I know,  
When my dear child is set forth at her  
best,

That neither court nor country, tho' they  
sought

Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
That lighted on Queen Esther, has her  
match."

Here ceased the kindly mother out of  
breath ;

And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay ;  
Then, as the white and glittering star of  
morn

Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by  
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
And left her maiden couch, and robed  
herself,

Help'd by the mother's careful hand and  
eye,

Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown ;  
Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,  
and said,

She never yet had seen her half so fair ;  
And call'd her like that maiden in the  
tale,

Whom Gwydion made by glamour out  
of flowers,

And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar  
first

Invaded Britain, "but we beat him back,  
As this great prince invaded us, and we,  
Not beat him back, but welcomed him  
with joy.

And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
For old am I, and rough the ways and  
wild ;

But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
I see my princess as I see her now,  
Clothed with my gift, and gay among the  
gay."

But while the women thus rejoiced,  
Geraint

Woke where he slept in the high hall,  
and call'd

For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
Of that good mother making Enid gay  
In such apparel as might well beseem  
His princess, or indeed the stately queen,  
He answer'd ; "Earl, entreat her by my  
love,

Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
That she ride with me in her faded silk."  
Yniol with that hard message went ; it  
fell,

Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn :  
For Enid all abash'd she knew not why,  
Dared not to glance at her good mother's  
face,

But silently, in all obedience,  
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd  
gift,

And robed them in her ancient suit again,  
And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
More than Geraint to greet her thus at-  
tired ;

And glancing all at once as keenly at her,  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid  
fall,

But rested with her sweet face satisfied ;  
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,  
Her by both hands he caught, and sweet-  
ly said.

"O my new mother, be not wroth or  
grieved

At your new son, for my petition to her.  
When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen,  
In words whose echo lasts, they were so  
sweet,

Made promise, that whatever bride I  
brought,  
Herself would clothe her like the sun in  
Heaven.

Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd  
hold,

Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
I vow'd that could I gain her, our kind  
Queen,

No hand but hers, should make your  
Enid burst

Sunlike from cloud — and likewise  
thought perhaps,

That service done so graciously would bind  
The two together ; for I wish the two  
To love each other : how should Enid find  
A nobler friend ? Another thought I had ;  
I came among you here so suddenly,  
That tho' her gentle presence at the lists  
Might well have served for proof that I  
was loved,

I doubted whether filial tenderness,  
Or easy nature, did not let itself  
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal ;  
Or whether some false sense in her own  
self

Of my contrasting brightness, overbore  
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall ;  
And such a sense might make her long  
for court

And all its dangerous glories : and I  
thought,

That could I someway prove such force  
in her

Link'd with such love for me, that at a  
word

(No reason given her) she could cast  
aside

A splendor dear to women, new to her,  
And therefore dearer ; or if not so new,  
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
Of intermitted custom ; then I felt

That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,  
Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do  
rest,

A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
That never shadow of mistrust can cross  
Between us. Grant me pardon for my  
thoughts :

And for my strange petition I will make  
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
When your fair child shall wear your  
costly gift

Beside your own warm hearth, with, on  
her knees,

Who knows ? another gift of the high God,  
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp  
you thanks."

He spoke : the mother smiled, but  
half in tears,

Then brought a mantle down and wrapt  
her in it,

And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode  
away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere  
had climb'd

The giant tower, from whose high crest,  
they say,

Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea ;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea

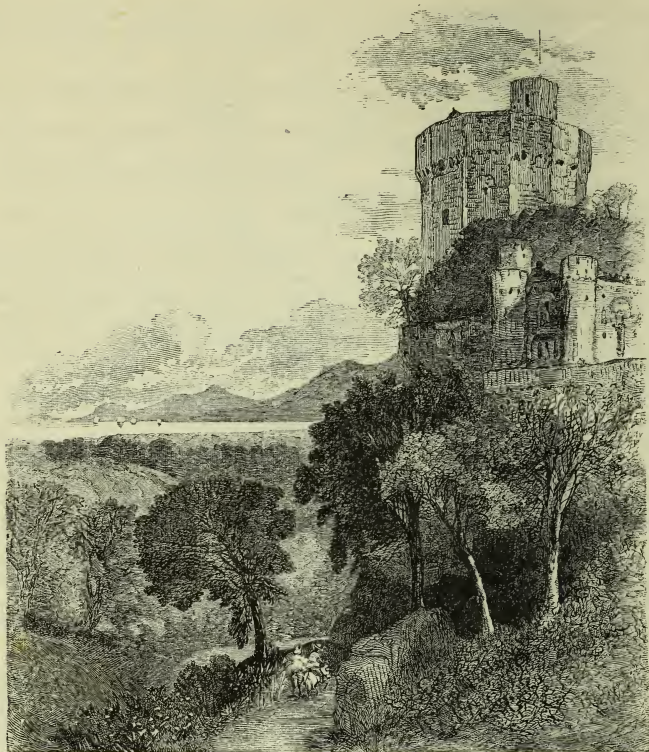
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale  
of Usk,

By the flat meadow, till she saw them  
come ;

And then descending met them at the  
gates,

Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,  
And did her honor as the Prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the  
sun ;





"The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,  
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea."

And all that week was old Caerleon gay,  
For by the hands of Dubric, the high  
saint,  
They twain were wedded with all cere-  
mony.

And this was on the last year's Whit-  
suntide.  
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the  
court.

And now this morning when he said  
to her,  
"Put on your worst and meanest dress,"  
she found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein.

O purblind race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for  
true;  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this  
world  
Groping, how many, until we pass and  
reach  
That other, where we see as we are seen !



So fared it with Geraint, who issuing  
 forth  
 That morning, when they both had got  
 to horse,  
 Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
 And felt that tempest brooding round his  
 heart,  
 Which, if he spoke at all, would break  
 perforce  
 Upon a head so dear in thunder, said :  
 "Not at my side. I charge you ride be-  
 fore,  
 Ever a good way on before ; and this  
 I charge you, on your duty as a wife,  
 Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
 No, not a word !" and Enid was aghast ;  
 And forth they rode, but scarce three  
 paces on,  
 When crying out " Effeminate as I am,  
 I will not fight my way with gilded  
 arms,  
 All shall be iron " ; he loosed a mighty  
 purse,  
 Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the  
 squire.  
 So the last sight that Enid had of home  
 Was all the marble threshold flashing,  
 strown  
 With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the  
 squire  
 Chafing his shoulder : then he cried again,  
 " To the wilds ! " and Enid leading down  
 the tracks  
 Thro' which he bade her lead him on,  
 they past  
 The marches, and by bandit-haunted  
 holds,  
 Gray swamps and pools, waste places of  
 the hern  
 And wildernesses, perilous paths, they  
 rode :  
 Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd  
 soon :  
 A stranger meeting them had surely  
 thought  
 They rode so slowly and they look'd so  
 pale,  
 That each had suffer'd some exceeding  
 wrong.  
 For he was ever saying to himself  
 " O I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
 To compass her with sweet observances,  
 To dress her beautifully and keep her  
 true " —  
 And there he broke the sentence in his  
 heart  
 Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue

May break it, when his passion masters  
 him.  
 And she was ever praying the sweet  
 heavens  
 To save her dear lord whole from any  
 wound.  
 And ever in her mind she cast about  
 For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
 Which made him look so cloudy and so  
 cold ;  
 Till the great plover's human whistle  
 amazed  
 Her heart, and glancing round the waste  
 she fear'd  
 In every wavering brake an ambuscade.  
 Then thought again " if there be such in  
 me,  
 I might amend it by the grace of heaven,  
 If he would only speak and tell me of it."

But when the fourth part of the day  
 was gone,  
 Then Enid was aware of three tall knights  
 On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a  
 rock  
 In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs  
 all ;  
 And heard one crying to his fellow,  
 " Look,  
 Here comes a laggard hanging down his  
 head,  
 Whose seems no bolder than a beaten hound ;  
 Come, we will slay him and will have his  
 horse  
 And armor, and his damsel shall be ours."

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and  
 said ;  
 " I will go back a little to my lord,  
 And I will tell him all their caitiff talk ;  
 For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
 Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,  
 Than that my lord should suffer loss or  
 shame."

Then she went back some paces of re-  
 turn,  
 Met his full frown timidly firm, and  
 said :  
 " My lord, I saw three bandits by the  
 rock  
 Waiting to fall on you, and heard them  
 boast  
 That they would slay you, and possess  
 your horse  
 And armor, and your damsel should be  
 theirs."

He made a wrathful answer. "Did I  
wish  
Your warning or your silence? one com-  
mand  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,  
And thus you keep it! Well then, look  
— for now,  
Whether you wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my death,  
Yourself shall see my vigor is not lost."

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit  
three.  
And at the midmost charging, Prince  
Geraint  
Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his  
breast  
And out beyond; and then against his  
brace  
Of comrades, each of whom had broken  
on him  
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd  
the twain  
Orslew them, and dismounting like a man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying  
him,  
Stript from the three dead wolves of  
woman born  
The three gay suits of armor which they  
wore,  
And let the bodies lie, but bound the  
suits  
Of armor on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, "Drive them on  
Before you"; and she drove them thro'  
the waste.

He follow'd nearer: ruth began to work  
Against his anger in him, while he watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the world,  
With difficulty in mild obedience  
Driving them on: he fain had spoken to  
her,  
And loosed in words of sudden fire the  
wrath  
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him  
all within;  
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her  
dead,  
Than to cry "Halt," and to her own  
bright face  
Accuse her of the least immodesty:

And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth  
the more  
That she *could* speak whom his own ear  
had heard  
Call herself false: and suffering thus he  
made  
Minutes an age: but in scarce longer time  
Than at Caerleon the full-tided *Ūsk*,  
Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,  
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly  
arm'd,  
Whereof one seem'd far larger than her  
lord,  
And shook her pulses, crying, "Look, a  
prize!  
Three horses and three goodly suits of  
arms,  
And all in charge of whom? a girl: set on."  
"Nay" said the second, "yonder comes  
a knight."  
The third, "A craven; how he hangs his  
head."  
The giant answer'd merrily, "Yea, but  
one?  
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon  
him."

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and  
said,  
"I will abide the coming of my lord,  
And I will tell him all their villany.  
My lord is weary with the fight before,  
And they will fall upon him unawares.  
I needs must disobey him for his good;  
How should I dare obey him to his harm?  
Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me  
for it,  
I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and said to  
him  
With timid firmness, "Have I leave to  
speak?"  
He said, "Ye take it, speaking," and  
she spoke.

"There lurk three villains yonder in  
the wood,  
And each of them is wholly arm'd, and  
one  
Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they  
say  
That they will fall upon you while you  
pass."

To which he flung a wrathful answer  
back :  
“And if there were an hundred in the  
wood,  
And every man were larger-limb'd than I,  
And all at once should sally out upon me,  
I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
As you that not obey me. Stand aside,  
And if I fall, cleave to the better man.”

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
Not dare to watch the combat, only  
breathe  
Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a  
breath.

And he, she dreaded most, bare down  
upon him.

Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ; but  
Geraint's,

A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet  
home,

And then brakeshort, and down his enemy  
roll'd,

And there lay still ; as he that tells the  
tale,

Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
That had a sapling growing on it, slip  
From the long shore-cliff's windy walls  
to the beach,

And there lie still, and yet the sapling  
grew :

Solay the man transfixt. His craven pair  
Of comrades, making slower at the  
Prince,

When now they saw their bulwark fallen,  
stood ;

On whom the victor, to confound them  
more,

Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ; for as  
one,

That listens near a torrent mountain-  
brook,

All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears  
The drumming thunder of the huger fall  
At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear  
His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
And foemen scared, like that false pair  
who turn'd

Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
Themselves had wrought on many an  
innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd  
the lance  
That pleased him best, and drew from  
those dead wolves

Their three gay suits of armor, each from  
each,  
And bound them on their horses, each on  
each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, “Drive them on  
Before you,” and she drove them thro'  
the wood.

He follow'd nearer still : the pain she had  
To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,  
Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,  
Together, served a little to disedge  
The sharpness of that pain about her heart :  
And they themselves, like creatures  
gently born

But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long  
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light  
ears, and felt

Her low firm voice and tender govern-  
ment.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood they  
past,

And issuing under open heavens beheld  
A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike  
chased

In the brown wild, and mowers mowing  
in it :

And down a rocky pathway from the place  
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in  
his hand

Bare victual for the mowers : and Geraint  
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale :  
Then, moving downward to the meadow  
ground,

He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by  
him, said,

“Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is so  
faint.”

“Yea, willingly,” replied the youth ;  
“and you,

My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,  
And only meet for mowers” ; then set  
down

His basket, and dismounting on the sward  
They let the horses graze, and ate them-  
selves.

And Enid took a little delicately,  
Less having stomach for it than desire  
To close with her lord's pleasure ; but  
Geraint

Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
And when he found all empty, was amazed ;  
And “Boy,” said he, “I have eaten all,  
but take

A horse and arms for guerdon ; choose  
the best."

He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
"My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold."

"Ye will be all the wealthier," cried the  
Prince.

"I take it as free gift, then," said the boy,  
"Not guerdon ; for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return,  
and fetch

Fresh victual for these mowers of our  
Earl ;

For these are his, and all the field is his,  
And I myself am his ; and I will tell him  
How great a man you are : he loves to know  
When men of mark are in his territory :  
And he will have you to his palace here,  
And serve you costlier than with mowers'  
fare."

Then said Geraint, "I wish no better  
fare :

I never ate with angrier appetite  
Than when I left your mowers dinnerless,  
And into no Earl's palace will I go.

I know, God knows, too much of palaces !  
And if he want me, let him come to me.  
But hire us some fair chamber for the  
night,

And stalling for the horses, and return  
With victual for these men, and let us  
know."

"Yea, my kind lord," said the glad  
youth, and went,  
Held his head high, and thought him-  
self a knight,  
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,  
Leading the horse, and they were left  
alone.

But when the Prince had brought his  
errant eyes  
Home from the rock, sideways he let  
them glance

At Enid, where she droopt : his own  
false doom,

That shadow of mistrust should never cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he  
sigh'd ;

Then with another humorous ruth re-  
mark'd

The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turn-  
ing scythe,

And after nodded sleepily in the heat.  
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,

And all the windy clamor of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the grass  
There growing longest by the meadow's  
edge,

And into many a listless annulet,  
Now over, now beneath her marriage ring,  
Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd  
And told them of a chamber, and they  
went ;

Where, after saying to her, "If ye will,  
Call for the woman of the house," to  
which

She answer'd, "Thanks, my lord" ; the  
two remain'd

Apart by all the chamber's width, and  
mute

As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of  
birth,

Or two wild men supporters of a shield,  
Painted, who stare at open space, nor  
glance

The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the  
street,

And heel against the pavement echoing,  
burst

Their drowse ; and either started while  
the door,

Push'd from without, drave backward to  
the wall,

And midmost of a rout of roisterers,  
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,  
Limours.

He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
In the mid-warmth of welcome and  
graspt hand,

Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly  
cheer

To feed the sudden guest, and sumptu-  
ously

According to his fashion, bade the host  
Call in what men soever were his friends,  
And feast with these in honor of their earl ;  
"And care not for the cost ; the cost is  
mine."

And wine and food were brought, and  
Earl Limours

Drank till he jested with all ease, and told  
Free tales, and took the word and play'd  
upon it,



And made it of two colors ; for his talk,  
When wine and free companions kindled  
him,

Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
Of fifty facets ; thus he moved the Prince  
To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd  
Limours,

“ Your leave, my lord, to cross the room,  
and speak

To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
And seems so lonely ? ” “ My free leave ”  
he said ;

“ Get her to speak : she does not speak  
to me.”

Then rose Limours and looking at his feet,  
Like him who tries the bridge he fears  
may fail,

Croft and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whispering-  
ly :

“ Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
Enid my early and my only love,  
Enid the loss of whom has turn'd me  
wild —

What chance is this ? how is it I see you  
here ?

You are in my power at last, are in my  
power.

Yet fear me not : I call mine own self wild,  
But keep a touch of sweet civility  
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
I thought, but that your father came  
between,

In former days you saw me favorably.

And if it were so do not keep it back :

Make me a little happier : let me know it :  
Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost ?  
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you  
are.

And, Enid, you and he, I see it with joy —  
You sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
You come with no attendance, page or  
maid,

To serve you — does he love you as of old ?  
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
Tho' men may bicker with the things  
they love,

They would not make them laughable  
in all eyes,

Not while they loved them ; and your  
wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks  
Your story, that this man loves you no  
more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now :

A common chance — right well I know  
it — pall'd —

For I know men : nor will ye win him  
back,

For the man's love once gone never returns.  
But here is one who loves you as of old ;  
With more exceeding passion than of old :  
Good, speak the word : my followers  
ring him round :

He sits unarm'd ; I hold a finger up ;  
They understand : no ; I do not mean  
blood :

Nor need you look so scared at what I say :  
My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
No stronger than a wall : there is the keep ;  
He shall not cross us more ; speak but  
the word :

Or speak it not ; but then by Him that  
made me

The one true lover which you ever had,  
I will make use of all the power I have.  
O pardon me ! the madness of that hour,  
When first I parted from you, moves me  
yet.”

At this the tender sound of his own  
voice

And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
Made his eye moist ; but Enid fear'd his  
eyes,

Moist as they were, wine-heated from  
the feast ;

And answer'd with such craft as women  
use,

Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
That breaks upon them perilously, and  
said :

“ Earl, if you love me as in former years,  
And do not practise on me, come with  
morn,

And snatch me from him as by violence ;  
Leave me to-night : I am weary to the  
death.”

Low at leave-taking, with his bran-  
dish'd plume

Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-  
amorous Earl,

And the stout Prince bade him a loud  
good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,  
Debating his command of silence given,

And that she now perforce must violate it,  
Held commune with herself, and while  
she held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly  
pleased

To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And hear him breathing low and equally.  
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,  
heap'd

The pieces of his armor in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden need ;  
Then dozed awhile herself, but overtoil'd  
By that day's grief and travel, evermore  
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and  
then

Went slipping down horrible precipices,  
And strongly striking out her limbs  
awoke ;

Then thought she heard the wild Earl at  
the door,

With all his rout of random followers,  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summon-  
ing her ;

Which was the red cock shouting to the  
light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy  
world,

And glimmer'd on his armor in the room.  
And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares : jangling, the  
casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at her.  
Then breaking his command of silence  
given,

She told him all that Earl Limours had  
said,

Except the passage that he loved her  
not ;

Nor left untold the craft herself had used ;  
But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and  
seem'd

So justified by that necessity,  
That tho' he thought "was it for him  
she wept

In Devon?" he but gave a wrathful  
groan,

Saying "your sweet faces make good  
fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid him  
bring

Charger and palfrey." So she glided out  
Among the heavy breathings of the house,  
And like a household Spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and re-  
turn'd :

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all un-  
ask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire ;  
Till issuing arm'd he found the host and  
cried,

"Thy reckoning, friend?" and ere he  
learnt it, "Take

Five horses and their armors"; and the  
host,

Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
"My lord, I scarce have spent the worth  
of one!"

"Ye will be all the wealthier," said the  
Prince,

And then to Enid, "Forward! and to-day  
I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever ye may hear, or see,  
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use  
To charge you) that ye speak not but  
obey."

And Enid answer'd, "Yea, my lord, I  
know

Your wish, and would obey; but riding  
first,

I hear the violent threats you do not hear,  
I see the danger which you cannot see :  
Then not to give you warning, that seems  
hard ;

Almost beyond me : yet I would obey."

"Yea so," said he, "do it : be not too  
wise ;

Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,  
Not quite mismated with a yawning  
clown,

But one with arms to guard his head and  
yours,

With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams."

With that he turn'd and look'd as  
keenly at her

As careful robins eye the delver's toil ;  
And that within her, which a wanton  
fool,

Or hasty judger would have call'd her  
guilt,

Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.  
And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten  
broad,

Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd  
the Bull,

Went Enid with her sullen follower on.  
 Once she look'd back, and when she saw  
 him ride  
 More near by many a rood than yester-  
 morn,  
 It wellnigh made her cheerful ; till Ge-  
 raint  
 Waving an angry hand as who should say  
 "Ye watch me," sadden'd all her heart  
 again.

But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
 The sound of many a heavily-galloping  
 hoof  
 Smote on her ear, and turning round she  
 saw

Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.  
 Then not to disobey her lord's behest,  
 And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
 As if he heard not, moving back she held  
 Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
 At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
 Because she kept the letter of his word  
 Was in a manner pleased, and turning,  
 stood.

And in the moment after, wild Limours,  
 Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-  
 cloud

Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking  
 storm,

Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,  
 And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,  
 Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him,  
 and bore

Down by the length of lance and arm  
 beyond

The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or  
 dead,

And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
 And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.  
 But at the flash and motion of the man  
 They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal  
 Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on the  
 sand,

But if a man who stands upon the brink  
 But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
 There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower,  
 So, scared but at the motion of the man,  
 Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,  
 And left him lying in the public way ;  
 So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled  
 Geraint,  
 Who saw the chargers of the two that fell

Start from their fallen lords, and wildly  
 fly,

Mixt with the fliers. "Horse and man,"  
 he said,

"All of one mind and all right-honest  
 friends !

Not a hoof left : and I methinks till now  
 Was honest — paid with horses and with  
 arms ;

I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg :  
 And so what say ye, shall we strip him  
 there

Your lover ? has your palfrey heartenough  
 To bear his armor ? shall we fast, or dine ?  
 No ? — then do you, being right honest,  
 pray

That we may meet the horsemen of Earl  
 Doorn,

I too would still be honest." Thus he  
 said :

And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
 And answering not one word, she led the  
 way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss  
 Falls in a far land and he knows it not,  
 But coming back he learns it, and the loss  
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to  
 death ;

Sofared it with Geraint, who being prick'd  
 In combat with the follower of Limours,  
 Bled underneath his armor secretly,  
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife  
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing it him-  
 self,

Till his eye darken'd and his helmet  
 wagg'd ;

And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
 Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,  
 The Prince, without a word, from his  
 horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,  
 Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
 Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of  
 his arms,

Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye  
 Moisten, till she had lighted on his  
 wound,

And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
 Had bared her forehead to the blistering  
 sun,

And swathed the hurt that drain'd her  
 dear lord's life.

Then after all was done that hand could do,  
 She rested, and her desolation came  
 Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,  
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,  
A woman weeping for her murder'd mate  
Was cared as much for as a summer  
shower :

One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,  
Nordared to waste a perilous pity on him :  
Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl ;  
Half whistling and half singing a coarse  
song,

He drove the dust against her veilless eyes.  
Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
The long way smoke beneath him in his  
fear ;

At which her palfrey whinnying lifted  
heel,

And scour'd into the coppices and was  
lost,

While the great charger stood, grieved  
like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl  
Doorm,  
Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet  
beard,

Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,  
Came riding with a hundred lances up ;  
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
Cried out with a big voice, " What, is he  
dead ? "

" No, no, not dead ! " she answer'd in all  
haste.

" Would some of your kind people take  
him up,

And bear him hence out of this cruel sun :  
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead."

Then said Earl Doorm ; " Well, if he  
be not dead,

Why wail ye for him thus ? ye seem a  
child.

And be he dead, I count you for a fool ;  
Your wailing will not quicken him : dead  
or not,

Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
Yet, since the face is comely — some of  
you,

Here, take him up, and bear him to our  
hall :

An if he live, we will have him of our  
band ;

And if he die, why earth has earth enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,  
A noble one."

He spake, and past away,

But left two brawny spearmen, who ad-  
vanced,

Each growling like a dog, when his good  
bone

Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,  
Gnawing and growling : so the ruffians  
growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,  
Their chance of booty from the morning's  
raid ;

Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,  
Such as they brought upon their forays out  
For those that might be wounded ; laid  
him on it

All in the hollow of his shield, and took  
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,  
(His gentle charger following him unled)  
And cast him and the bier in which he lay  
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as be-  
fore,

And cursing their lost time, and the dead  
man,

And their own Earl, and their own souls,  
and her.

They might as well have blest her : she  
was deaf

To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,  
There in the naked hall, propping his head,  
And chafing his pale hands, and calling  
to him.

And at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
And found his own dear bride propping  
his head,

And chafing his faint hands, and calling  
to him ;

And felt the warm tears falling on his face ;  
And said to his own heart, " she weeps  
for me " :

And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as  
dead,

That he might prove her to the uttermost,  
And say to his own heart " she weeps  
for me."

But in the falling afternoon return'd  
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the  
hall.

His lusty spearmen follow'd him with  
noise :

Each hurling down a heap of things that  
rang



Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,  
 And doff'd his helm : and then there  
     flutter'd in,  
 Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated  
     eyes,  
 A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
 And mingled with the spearmen : and  
     Earl Doorn  
 Struck with a knife's haft hard against  
     the board,  
 And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his  
     spears.  
 And men brought in whole hogs and  
     quarter beeves,  
 And all the hall was dim with steam of  
     flesh :  
 And none spake word, but all sat down  
     at once,  
 And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
 Feeding like horses when you hear them  
     feed ;  
 Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
 To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.  
 But when Earl Doorn had eaten all he  
     would,  
 He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found  
 A damsel drooping in a corner of it.  
 Then he remember'd her, and how she  
     wept ;  
 And out of her there came a power upon  
     him ;  
 And rising on the sudden he said, " Eat !  
 I never yet beheld a thing so pale.  
 God's curse, it makes me mad to see you  
     weep.  
 Eat ! Look yourself. Good luck had  
     your good man,  
 For were I dead who is it would weep for me ?  
 Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath,  
 Have I beheld a lily like yourself.  
 And so there lived some color in your  
     cheek,  
 There is not one among my gentlewomen  
 Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.  
 But listen to me, and by me be ruled,  
 And I will do the thing I have not done,  
 For you shall share my earldom with me,  
     girl,  
 And we will live like two birds in one  
     nest,  
 And I will fetch you forage from all fields,  
 For I compel all creatures to my will."

He spoke : the brawny spearman let  
     his cheek  
 Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and  
     turning stared ;

While some, whose souls the old serpent  
     long had drawn  
 Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd  
     leaf  
 And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's  
     ear  
 What shall not be recorded — women they,  
 Women, or what had been those gracious  
     things,  
 But now desired the humbling of their  
     best,  
 Yea, would have helped him to it : and  
     all at once  
 They hated her, who took no thought of  
     them,  
 But answer'd in low voice, her meek head  
     yet  
 Drooping, " I pray you of your courtesy,  
 He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard her  
     speak,  
 But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
 With what himself had done so graciously,  
 Assumed that she had thanked him, add-  
     ing, " yea,  
 Eat and be glad, for I account you mine."

She answer'd meekly, " How should I  
     be glad  
 Henceforth in all the world at anything,  
 Until my lord arise and look upon me ?"

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her  
     talk,  
 As all but empty heart and weariness  
 And sickly nothing ; suddenly seized on  
     her,  
 And bare her by main violence to the  
     board,  
 And thrust the dish before her, crying,  
     " Eat."

" No, no," said Enid, vext, " I will  
     not eat,  
 Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
 And eat with me." " Drink, then," he  
     answer'd. " Here !"  
 (And fill'd a horn with wine and held it  
     to her,)  
 " Lo ! I, myself, when flush'd with fight,  
     or hot,  
 God's curse, with anger — often I myself,  
 Before I well have drunken, scarce can  
     eat :  
 Drink therefore and the wine will change  
     your will."

"Not so," she cried, "by Heaven, I will not drink,  
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,  
And drink with me; and if he rise no more,  
I will not look at wine until I die."

At this he turn'd all red and paced his hall,  
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper lip,  
And coming up close to her, said at last:  
"Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,  
Take warning: yonder man is surely dead;  
And I compel all creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wail  
for one,  
Who put your beauty to this flout and scorn

By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how ye butt against my wish,  
That I forbear you thus: cross me no more.  
At least put off to please me this poor gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's weed:

I love that beauty should go beautifully:  
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of one,  
Who loves that beauty should go beautifully!  
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this:  
obey."

He spoke, and one among his gentlewomen  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down the front  
With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
Strike where it clung: so thickly shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,  
With life-long injuries burning unavenged,  
And now their hour has come; and Enid said:

"In this poor gown my dear lord found me first,  
And loved me serving in my father's hall:  
In this poor gown I rode with him to court,

And there the Queen array'd me like the sun:

In this poor gown he bade me clothe myself,

When now we rode upon this fatal quest  
Of honor, where no honor can be gain'd:  
And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough:  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be:  
I never loved, can never love but him:  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
He being as he is, to let me be."

Then strode the brute Earl up and down his hall,  
And took his russet beard between his teeth;

Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood

Crying, "I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;  
Take my salute," unknighly with flat hand,

However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, "he had not dared to do it,

Except he surely knew my lord was dead,"  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
Which sees the trapper coming thro' the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword,

(It lay beside him in the hollow shield,)  
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it

Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball

The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.  
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.

And all the men and women in the hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled

Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
Were left alone together, and he said:

"Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man;  
Done you more wrong: we both have undergone  
That trouble which has left me thrice your own:



"The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.  
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead."

Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.  
And here I lay this penance on myself,  
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you yester-morn —  
You thought me sleeping, but I heard  
you say,  
I heard you say, that you were no true wife :  
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it :  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die than  
doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart :  
She only prayed him, "Fly, they will  
return

And slay you : fly, your charger is without,  
My palfrey lost." "Then, Enid, shall  
you ride

Behind me." "Yea," said Enid, "let  
us go."

And moving out they found the stately  
horse,

Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,  
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came,  
and stoop'd

With a low whinny toward the pair : and  
she

Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,  
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the horse

Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on  
his foot

She set her own and climb'd ; he turn'd  
his face

And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast  
her arms

About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
Than lived thro' her, who in that perilous  
hour

Put hand to hand beneath her husband's  
heart,

And felt him hers again : she did not weep,  
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist  
Like that which kept the heart of Eden  
green

Before the useful trouble of the rain :  
Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes  
As not to see before them on the path,  
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his  
lance

In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.  
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,  
She, with her mind all full of what had  
chanced,

Shriek'd to the stranger, "Slay not a  
dead man !"



"The voice of Enid," said the knight ;  
but she,

Beholding it was Edyrn, son of Nudd,  
Was moved so much the more, and shriek'd  
again,

"O cousin, slay not him who gave you  
life."

And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake:  
"My lord Geraint, I greet you with all  
love ;

I took you for a bandit knight of Doorn ;  
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,  
Who love you, Prince, with something  
of the love

Wherewith we love the Heaven that  
chastens us.

For once, when I was up so high in pride  
That I was halfway down the slope to  
Hell,

By overthrowing me you threw me higher.  
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table  
Round,

And since I knew this Earl, when I my-  
self

Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,  
I come the mouthpiece of our King to  
Doorn

(The King is close behind me) bidding him  
Disband himself, and scatter all his  
powers,

Submit, and hear the judgment of the  
King."

"He hears the judgment of the King  
of Kings,"

Cried the wan Prince ; "and lo the  
powers of Doorn

Are scatter'd," and he pointed to the field,  
Where, huddled here and there on mound  
and knoll,

Were men and women staring and aghast,  
While some yet fled ; and then he plain-  
lier told

How the huge Earl lay slain within his  
hall.

But when the knight besought him,  
"Follow me,

Prince, to the camp, and in the King's  
own ear

Speak what has chanced ; yes surely have  
endured

Strange chances here alone" ; that other  
flush'd,

And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
Fearing the mild face of the blameless  
King,

And after madness acted question ask'd :

Till Edyrn crying, "If ye will not go  
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,"  
"Enough," he said, "I follow," and they  
went.

But Enid in their going had two fears,  
One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,  
And one from Edyrn. Every now and  
then,

When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her side,  
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
From which old fires have broken, men  
may fear

Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said :

"Fair and dear cousin, you that most  
had cause

To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.  
Yourself were first the blameless cause to  
make

My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood  
Break into furious flame ; being repulsed  
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and  
wrought

Until I overturn'd him ; then set up  
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)

My haughty jousts, and took a paramour ;  
Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,

And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax'd in pride, that I believed myself

Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad :  
And, but for my main purpose in these

jousts,  
I should have slain your father, seized  
yourself.

I lived in hope that sometime you would  
come

To these my lists with him whom best  
you loved ;

And there, poor cousin, with your meek  
blue eyes,

The truest eyes that ever answer'd heaven,  
Behold me overturn and trample on him.

Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd  
to me,

I should not less have kill'd him. And  
you came, —

But once you came, — and with your own  
true eyes

Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one  
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow

My proud self, and my purpose three  
years old,

And set his foot upon me, and give me life.  
There, was I broken down ; there was I  
saved :

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating the  
lie



He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
And all the penance the Queen laid upon  
me

Was but to rest awhile within her court ;  
Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,  
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known, I  
found,

Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace  
Of tenderest courtesies, that I began  
To glance behind me at my former life,  
And find that it had been the wolf's indeed :  
And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high  
saint,

Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,  
Which, when it weds with manhood,  
makes a man.

And you were often there about the Queen,  
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you saw ;  
Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,  
But kept myself aloof till I was changed ;  
And fear not, cousin ; I am changed  
indeed."

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous  
Of what they long for, good in friend or foe,  
There most in those who most have done  
them ill.

And when they reach'd the camp the  
King himself  
Advanced to greet them, and beholding  
her

Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a word,  
But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held  
In converse for a little, and return'd,  
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from  
horse,

And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-  
like,

And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
And glancing for a minute, till he saw her  
Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and said :

" Prince, when of late ye pray'd me  
for my leave  
To move to your own land, and there  
defend

Your marches, I was prick'd with some  
reproof,

As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,  
By having look'd too much thro' alien eyes,  
And wrought too long with delegated  
hands,

Not used mine own : but now behold  
me come

To cleanse this common sewer of all my  
rea'm,

With Edyrn and with others : have ye  
look'd

At Edyrn ? have ye seen how nobly  
changed ?

This work of his is great and wonderful.  
His very face with change of heart is  
changed.

The world will not believe a man repents :  
And this wise world of ours is mainly  
right.

Full seldom *does* a man repent, or use  
Both grace and will to pick the vicious  
quitch

Of blood and custom wholly out of him,  
And make all clean, and plant himself  
afresh.

Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart  
As I will weed this land before I go.

I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,  
Not rashly, but have proved him every way  
One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
Sanest and most obedient : and indeed  
This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself  
After a life of violence, seems to me  
A thousand-fold more great and wonderful  
Than if some knight of mine, risking his  
life,

My subject with my subjects under him,  
Should make an onslaught single on a  
realm

Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,  
And were himself nigh wounded to the  
death."

So spake the King ; low bow'd the  
Prince, and felt

His work was neither great nor won-  
derful,

And past to Enid's tent ; and thither  
came

The King's own leech to look into his  
hurt ;

And Enid tended on him there ; and  
there

Her constant motion round him, and the  
breath

Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,  
Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood  
With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
As the south-west that blowing Bala  
lake

Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the  
days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,  
 The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes  
 On each of all whom Uther left in charge  
 Long since, to guard the justice of the King :  
 He look'd and found them wanting ; and as now  
 Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills  
 To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,  
 He rooted out the slothful officer  
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,  
 And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
 With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men  
 To till the wastes, and moving everywhere  
 Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
 And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past  
 With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.  
 There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,  
 And clothed her in apparel like the day.  
 And tho' Geraint could never take again  
 That comfort from their converse which he took  
 Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,  
 He rested well content that all was well.  
 Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,  
 And fifty knights rode with them to the shores  
 Of Severn, and they past to their own land.  
 And there he kept the justice of the King  
 So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
 Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died :  
 And being ever foremost in the chase,  
 And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
 They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.  
 But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call  
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
 Enid the Good ; and in their halls arose  
 The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
 Of times to be ; nor did he doubt her more  
 But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd  
 A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
 Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
 In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds  
 were still,  
 And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
 Before an oak, so hollow huge and old  
 It look'd a tower of ruin'd masonwork,  
 At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court :  
 She hated all the knights, and heard it thought  
 Their lavish comment when her name was named.  
 For once, when Arthur walking all alone,  
 Vext at a rumor rife about the Queen,  
 Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,  
 Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy mood  
 With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken voice,  
 And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
 With dark sweet hints of some who prized him more  
 Than who should prize him most ; at which the King  
 Had gazed upon her blankly and gone by :  
 But one had watch'd, and had not held his peace :  
 It made the laughter of an afternoon  
 That Vivien should attempt the blameless King.  
 And after that, she set herself to gain  
 Him, the most famous man of all those times,  
 Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,  
 Had built the King his havens, ships, and halls,  
 Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens ;  
 The people call'd him Wizard ; whom at first  
 She play'd about with slight and sprightly talk,  
 And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd points  
 Of slander, glancing here and grazing there ;  
 And yielding to his kindlier moods, the Seer  
 Would watch her at her petulance, and play,  
 Ev'n when they seem'd unlovable, and laugh

As those that watch a kitten ; thus he  
 grew  
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and  
 she,  
 Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,  
 Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
 Turn red or pale, would often when they  
 met  
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
 With such a fixt devotion, that the old  
 man,  
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at  
 times  
 Would flatter his own wish in age for love,  
 And half believe her true : for thus at  
 times  
 He waver'd ; but that other clung to him,  
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.  
 Then fell upon him a great melancholy ;  
 And leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the  
 beach ;  
 There found a little boat, and stept into  
 it ;  
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her  
 not.  
 She took the helm and he the sail ; the  
 boat  
 Drave with a sudden wind across the  
 deeps,  
 And touching Breton sands, they disem-  
 bark'd.  
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,  
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.  
 For Merlin once had told her of a charm,  
 The which if any wrought on any one  
 With woven paces and with waving arms,  
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,  
 From which was no escape for evermore ;  
 And none could find that man for ever-  
 more,  
 Nor could he see but him who wrought  
 the charm  
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
 And lost to life and use and name and  
 fame.  
 And Vivien ever sought to work the charm  
 Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,  
 As fancying that her glory would be great  
 According to his greatness whom she  
 quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd  
 his feet,  
 As if in deepest reverence and in love.  
 A twist of gold was round her hair ; a robe  
 Of samite without price, that more express

Than hid her, clung about her lissome  
 limbs,  
 In color like the satin-shining palm  
 On sallows in the windy gleams of March :  
 And while she kiss'd them, crying,  
 "Trample me,  
 Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the  
 world,  
 And I will pay you worship ; tread me  
 down  
 And I will kiss you for it" ; he was mute :  
 So dark a forethought roll'd about his  
 brain,  
 As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
 The blind wave feeling round his long  
 sea-hall  
 In silence : wherefore, when she lifted up  
 A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,  
 "O Merlin, do ye love me ?" and again,  
 "O Merlin, do ye love me ?" and once  
 more,  
 "Great Master, do ye love me ?" he was  
 mute.  
 And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,  
 Writhed toward him, slid up his knee  
 and sat,  
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet  
 Together, curv'd an arm about his neck,  
 Clung like a snake ; and letting her left  
 hand  
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,  
 Made with her right a comb of pearl to  
 part  
 The lists of such a beard as youth gone out  
 Had left in ashes : then he spoke and said,  
 Not looking at her, "who are wise in love  
 Love most, say least," and Vivien an-  
 swer'd quick,  
 "I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
 In Arthur's arias hall at Camelot :  
 But neither eyes nor tongue — O stupid  
 child !  
 Yet you are wise who say it ; let me think  
 Silence is wisdom : I am silent then  
 And ask no kiss" ; then adding all at  
 once,  
 "And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,"  
 drew  
 The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard  
 Across her neck and bosom to her knee,  
 And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
 Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,  
 Who meant to eat her up in that wild wood  
 Without one word. So Vivien call'd  
 herself,  
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
 Veil'd in gray vapor ; till he sadly smiled :





"Drew  
The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard  
Across her neck and bosom to her knee."

"To what request for what strange boon,"  
he said,

"Are these your pretty tricks and fool-  
eries,

O Vivien, the preamble? yet my thanks,  
For these have broken up my melan-  
choly."

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,  
"What, O my Master, have ye found  
your voice?

I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at  
last!

But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
Except indeed to drink: no cup had we:  
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the spring

That gather'd trickling dropwise from  
the cleft,

And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
And offer'd you it kneeling: then ye  
drank

And knew no more, nor gave me one  
poor word;

O no more thanks than might a goat  
have given

With no more sign of reverence than a  
beard.

And when we halted at that other well,  
And I was faint to swooning, and ye  
lay

Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of  
those



Deep meadows we had traversed, did you  
 know  
 That Vivien bathed your feet before her  
 own?  
 And yet no thanks : and all thro' this  
 wild wood  
 And all this morning when I fondled  
 you :  
 Boon, yes, there was a boon, one not so  
 strange —  
 How had I wrong'd you? surely you are  
 wise,  
 But such a silence is more wise than kind."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers  
 and said ;  
 "O did you never lie upon the shore,  
 And watch the curl'd white of the coming  
 wave  
 Glass'd in the slippery sand before it  
 breaks?  
 Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,  
 Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,  
 Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.  
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's  
 court  
 To break the mood. You follow'd me  
 unask'd ;  
 And when I look'd, and saw you following  
 still,  
 My mind involved yourself the nearest  
 thing  
 In that mind-mist : for shall I tell you  
 truth?  
 You seem'd that wave about to break  
 upon me  
 And sweep me from my hold upon the  
 world,  
 My use and name and fame. Your par-  
 don, child.  
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd all  
 again.  
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe you  
 thrice,  
 Once for wrong done you by confusion,  
 next  
 For thanks it seem still now neglected, last  
 For these your dainty gambols : where-  
 fore ask ;  
 And take this boon so strange and not so  
 strange."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-  
 fully ;  
 "O not so strange as my long asking it,  
 Nor yet so strange as you yourself are  
 strange,

Nor half so strange as that dark mood of  
 yours.

I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine ;  
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did me  
 wrong.

The people call you prophet : let it be :  
 But not of those that can expound them-  
 selves.

Take Vivien for expounder : she will call  
 That three-days-long presageful gloom of  
 yours

No presage, but the same mistrustful mood  
 That makes you seem less noble than  
 yourself,

Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,  
 Now ask'd again : for see you not, dear  
 love,

That such a mood as that, which lately  
 gloom'd

Your fancy when you saw me following  
 you,

Must make me fear still more you are not  
 mine,

Must make me yearn still more to prove  
 you mine,

And make me wish still more to learn  
 this charm

Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me.  
 The charm so taught will charm us both  
 to rest.

For, grant me some slight power upon  
 your fate,

I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing  
 you mine.

And therefore be as great as you are named,  
 Not muffled round with selfish reticence.

How hard you look and how denyingly !  
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,

That I should prove it on you unawares,  
 To make you lose your use and name and  
 fame,

That makes me most indignant ; then  
 our bond

Had best be loosed for ever : but think  
 or not,

By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean  
 truth,

As clean as blood of babes, as white as  
 milk :

O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
 If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
 Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,  
 Have tript on such conjectural treachery—  
 May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir  
 hell

Down, down, and close again, and nip  
me flat,  
If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,  
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am;  
And grant my re-reiterated wish,  
The great proof of your love : because I  
think,  
However wise, ye hardly know me yet."

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers  
and said,

"I never was less wise, however wise,  
Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,  
Than when I told you first of such a charm.  
Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,  
Too much I trusted, when I told you that,  
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd  
man

Thro' woman the first hour ; for howsoe'er  
In children a great curiousness be well,  
Who have to learn themselves and all the  
world,

In you, that are no child, for still I find  
Your face is practised, when I spell the  
lines,

I call it, — well, I will not call it vice :  
But since you name yourself the summer  
fly,

I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,  
That settles, beaten back, and beaten  
back

Settles, till one could yield for weariness :  
But since I will not yield to give you power  
Upon my life and use and name and fame,  
Why will you never ask some other boon ?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too  
much."

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted  
maid

That ever bided tryst at village stile,  
Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears.

"Nay, master, be not wrathful with your  
maid ;

Caress her : let her feel herself forgiven  
Who feels no heart to ask another boon.  
I think you hardly know the tender rhyme  
Of 'trust me not at all or all in all.'

I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it  
once,

And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

'In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be  
ours,

Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal  
powers :

Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

'It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.

'The little rift within the lover's lute  
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

'It is not worth the keeping : let it go :  
But shall it ? answer, darling, answer, no.  
And trust me not at all or all in all.'

O master, do ye love my tender rhyme ?"

And Merlin look'd and half believed  
her true,

So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her  
tears

Like sunlight on the plain behind a  
shower :

And yet he answer'd half indignantly.

"Far other was the song that once I  
heard

By this huge oak, sung nearly where we  
sit :

For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,  
To chase a creature that was current then  
In these wild woods, the hart with golden  
horns.

It was the time when first the question rose  
About the founding of a Table Round,  
That was to be, for love of God and men  
And noble deeds, the flower of all the  
world.

And each incited each to noble deeds.

And while we waited, one, the youngest  
of us,

We could not keep him silent, out he  
flash'd,

And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl  
together,

And should have done it ; but the beau-  
teous beast

Scared by the noise upstarted at our feet,  
And like a silver shadow slipt away

Thro' the dim land ; and all day long we  
rode

Thro' the dim land against a rushing  
wind,

That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,  
And chased the flashes of his golden horns  
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well

That laughs at iron — as our warriors did —  
 Where children cast their pins and nails,  
     and cry,  
 ‘ Laugh, little well,’ but touch it with a  
     sword,  
 It buzzes wildly round the point ; and  
     there  
 We lost him : such a noble song was that.  
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet  
     rhyme,  
 I felt as tho’ you knew this cursed charm,  
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name and  
     fame.”

And Vivien answer’d smiling mourn-  
     fully ;  
 “ O mine have ebb’d away for evermore,  
 And all thro’ following you to this wild  
     wood,  
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
 Lo now, what hearts have men ! they  
     never mount  
 As high as woman in her selfless mood.  
 And touching fame, howe’er ye scorn  
     my song,  
 Take one verse more — the lady speaks  
     it — this :

‘ My name, once mine, now thine, is  
     closelier mine,  
 For fame, could fame be mine, that fame  
     were thine,  
 And shame, could shame be thine, that  
     shame were mine.  
 So trust me not at all or all in all.’

“ Says she not well ? and there is more  
     — this rhyme  
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen,  
 That burst in dancing, and the pearls were  
     spilt ;  
 Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept.  
 But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
 Ran down the silken thread to kiss each  
     other  
 On her white neck — so is it with this  
     rhyme :  
 It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
 And every minstrel sings it differently ;  
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of  
     pearls ;  
 ‘ Mandreams of Fame while woman wakes  
     to love.’  
 True : Love, tho’ Love were of the gross-  
     est, carves  
 A portion from the solid present, eats

And uses, careless of the rest ; but Fame,  
 The Fame that follows death is nothing  
     to us ;  
 And what is Fame in life but half-disfame,  
 And counterchanged with darkness ? you  
     yourself  
 Know well that Envy calls you Devil’s  
     son,  
 And since you seem the Master of all  
     Art,  
 They fain would make you Master of all  
     Vice.”

And Merlin lock’d his hand in hers and  
     said,  
 “ I once was looking for a magic weed,  
 And found a fair young squire who sat  
     alone,  
 Had carved himself a knightly shield of  
     wood,  
 And then was painting on it fancied arms,  
 Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun  
 In dexter chief ; the scroll ‘ I follow fame.’  
 And speaking not, but leaning over him,  
 I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
 And made a Gardener putting in a graff,  
 With this for motto, ‘ Rather use than  
     fame.’  
 You should have seen him blush ; but  
     afterwards  
 He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
 For you, methinks you think you love  
     me well ;  
 For me, I love you somewhat ; rest : and  
     Love  
 Should have some rest and pleasure in  
     himself,  
 Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
 Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
 Of him you say you love : but Fame with  
     men,  
 Being but ampler means to serve mankind,  
 Should have small rest or pleasure in her-  
     self,  
 But work as vassal to the larger love,  
 That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.  
 Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame  
     again  
 Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my  
     boon !  
 What other ? for men sought to prove  
     me vile,  
 Because I wish’d to give them greater  
     minds :  
 And then did Envy call me Devil’s son :  
 The sick weak beast seeking to help her-  
     self

By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought  
Her own claw back, and wounded her own heart.

Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,  
But when my name was lifted up, the storm  
Broke on the mountain and I cared not for it.

Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame,

Yet needs must work my work. That other fame,

To one at least, who hath not children, vague,

The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
I cared not for it : a single misty star,  
Which is the second in a line of stars  
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,  
I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
Of some vast charm concluded in that star  
To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,

Giving you power upon me thro' this charm,

That you might play me falsely, having power,

However well you think you love me now  
(As sons of kings loving in pupillage  
Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power)

I rather dread the loss of use than fame ;  
If you — and not so much from wickedness,

As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,  
To keep me all to your own self, or else  
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy, —  
Should try this charm on whom you say  
you love."

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath.

"Have I not sworn ? I am not trusted.  
Good !

Well, hide it, hide it ; I shall find it out ;  
And being found take heed of Vivien.

A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
Might feel some sudden turn of anger born  
Of your misfaith ; and your fine epithet  
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine  
Without the full heart back may merit well

Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,  
My daily wonder is, I love at all.

And as to woman's jealousy, O why not ?

O to what end, except a jealous one,  
And one to make me jealous if I love,  
Was this fair charm invented by yourself ?  
I well believe that all about this world  
Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,  
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower  
From which is no escape for evermore."

Then the great Master merrily answer'd her.

"Full many a love in loving youth was mine,

I needed then no charm to keep them mine

But youth and love ; and that full heart of yours

Whereof you prattle, may now assure you mine ;

Solive uncharm'd. For those who wrought it first,

The wrist is parted from the hand that waved,

The feet unmortised from their ankle-bones

Who paced it, ages back : but will ye hear

The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme ?

"There lived a king in the most Eastern East,

Less old than I, yet older, for my blood  
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.

A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty nameless isles ;

And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,  
He saw two cities in a thousand boats

All fighting for a woman on the sea.  
And pushing his black craft among them all,

He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought her off,

With loss of half his people arrow-slain ;  
A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,

They said a light came from her when she moved :

And since the pirate would not yield her up,

The King impaled him for his piracy ;  
Then made her Queen : but those isle-nurtur'd eyes

Waged such unwilling tho' successful war  
On all the youth, they sicken'd ; coun-

cils thinn'd,  
And armies waned, for magnet-like she drew

The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts ;



And beasts themselves would worship ;  
 camels knelt  
 Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain  
 back  
 That carry kings in castles, bow'd black  
 knees  
 Of homage, ringing with their serpent  
 hands,  
 To make her smile, her golden ankle-  
 bells.  
 What wonder, being jealous, that he sent  
 His horns of proclamation out thro' all  
 The hundred under-kingdoms that he  
 sway'd  
 To find a wizard who might teach the  
 King  
 Some charm, which being wrought upon  
 the Queen  
 Might keep her all his own : to such a one  
 He promised more than ever king has  
 given,  
 A league of mountain full of golden mines,  
 A province with a hundred miles of coast,  
 A palace and a princess, all for him :  
 But on all those who tried and fail'd, the  
 King  
 Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning  
 by it  
 To keep the list low and pretenders back,  
 Or like a king, not to be trifled with —  
 Their heads should moulder on the city  
 gates.  
 And many tried and fail'd, because the  
 charm  
 Of nature in her overbore their own :  
 And many a wizard brow bleach'd on  
 the walls :  
 And many weeks a troop of carrion crows  
 Hung like a cloud above the gateway  
 towers."

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said :  
 " I sit and gather honey ; yet, methinks,  
 Your tongue has tript a little : ask your-  
 self.

The lady never made *unwilling* war  
 With those fine eyes : she had her pleas-  
 ure in it,  
 And made her good man jealous with  
 good cause.  
 And lived there neither dame nor dam-  
 sel then

Wroth at a lover's loss ? were all as tame,  
 I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair ?  
 Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
 Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,  
 Or make her paler with a poison'd rose ?

Well, those were not our days : but did  
 they find  
 A wizard ? Tell me, was he like to thee ?"

She ceased, and made her lithe arm  
 round his neck  
 Tighten, and then drew back, and let  
 her eyes  
 Speak for her, glowing on him, like a  
 bride's  
 On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing, " Nay, not like  
 to me.

At last they found — his foragers for  
 charms —

A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
 Who lived alone in a great wild on grass ;  
 Read but one book, and ever reading grew  
 So grated down and filed away with  
 thought,

So lean his eyes were monstrous ; while  
 the skin

Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and  
 spine.

And since he kept his mind on one sole  
 aim,

Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted  
 flesh,

Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall  
 That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting  
 men

Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,  
 And heard their voices talk behind the  
 wall,

And learnt their elemental secrets, powers  
 And forces ; often o'er the sun's bright eye  
 Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
 And lash'd it at the base with slanting  
 storm ;

Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,  
 When the lake whiten'd and the pine-  
 wood roar'd,

And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow,  
 sunn'd

The world to peace again : here was the  
 man.

And so by force they dragg'd him to the  
 King.

And then he taught the King to charm  
 the Queen

In such-wise, that no man could see her  
 more,

Nor saw she save the King, who wrought  
 the charm,

Coming and going, and she lay as dead,  
 And lost all use of life : but when the King



"She ceased, and made her lithe arm round his neck  
Tighten, and then drew back, and let her eyes  
Speak for her."

Made proffer of the league of golden mines,  
The province with a hundred miles of  
coast,  
The palace and the princess, that old man  
Went back to his old wild, and lived on  
grass,  
And vanish'd, and his book came down  
to me."

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily ;  
"You have the book : the charm is  
written in it :  
Good : take my counsel : let me know  
it at once :  
For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd  
thirty-fold,  
And whelm all this beneath as vast a  
mound  
As after furious battle turfs the slain  
On some wild down above the windy deep,  
I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm :  
Then, if I tried it, who should blame me  
then ?"

And smiling as a Master smiles at one  
That is not of his school, nor any school  
But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
On all things all day long ; he answer'd  
her.

"You read the book, my pretty Vivien !  
O ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
But every page having an ample marge,  
And every marge enclosing in the midst  
A square of text that looks a little blot,  
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas ;  
And every square of text an awful charm,  
Writ in a language that has long gone by.  
So long, that mountains have arisen since  
With cities on their flanks — *you* read  
the book !  
And every margin scribbled, crost, and  
cramm'd  
With comment, densest condensation,  
hard  
To mind and eye ; but the long sleepless  
nights  
Of my long life have made it easy to me.

And none can read the text, not even I ;  
And none can read the comment but  
myself ;

And in the comment did I find the charm.  
O, the results are simple ; a mere child  
Might use it to the harm of any one,  
And never could undo it : ask no more :  
Fortho' you should not prove it upon me,  
But keep that oath you swore, you might,  
perchance,  
Assay it on some one of the Table Round,  
And all because you dream they babble  
of you."

And Vivien, frowning in true anger,  
said :

"What dare the full-fed liars say of me ?  
*They* ride abroad redressing human  
wrongs !

*They* sit with knife in meat and wine in  
horn.

*They* bound to holy vows of chastity !  
Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.  
But you are man, you well can understand  
The shame that cannot be explain'd for  
shame.

Not one of all the drove should touch me :  
swine !"

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her  
words.

"Ye breathe but accusation vast and  
vague,  
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If  
ye know,  
Set up the charge ye know, to stand or  
fall !"

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrath-  
fully.

"O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him  
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his  
wife

And two fair babes, and went to distant  
lands ;

Was one year gone, and on returning found  
Not two but three : there lay the reck-  
ling, one

But one hour old ! What said the happy  
sire ?

A seven months' babe had been a truer  
gift.

Those twelve sweet moons confused his  
fatherhood."

Then answer'd Merlin "Nay, I know  
the tale.

Sir Valence wedded with an outland  
dame :

Some cause had kept him sunder'd from  
his wife :

One child they had : it lived with her :  
she died :

His kinsman travelling on his own affair  
Was charged by Valence to bring home  
the child.

He brought, not found it therefore : take  
the truth."

"O ay," said Vivien, "overtrue a tale.  
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagamore,  
That ardent man ? 'to pluck the flower  
in season' ;

So says the song, 'I trow it is no treason.'  
O Master, shall we call him overquick  
To crop his own sweet rose before the  
hour ?"

And Merlin answer'd "Overquick are  
you

To catch a lothly plume fall'n from the  
wing

Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey  
Is man's good name : he never wrong'd  
his bride.

I know the tale. An angry gust of wind  
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-  
room'd

And many-corridor'd complexities  
Of Arthur's palace : then he found a door  
And darkling felt the sculptured orna-  
ment

That wreathen round it made it seem his  
own ;

And wearied out made for the couch and  
slept,

A stainless man beside a stainless maid ;  
And either slept, nor knew of other there ;  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely  
down,

Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
He rose without a word and parted from  
her :

But when the thing was blazed about the  
court,

The brute world howling forced them in-  
to bonds,

And as it chanced they are happy, being  
pure."

"O ay," said Vivien, "that were likely  
too.

What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale



And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,  
Or some black wether of St. Satan's fold.  
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead ! ”

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge,  
“ A sober man is Percivale and pure ;  
But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,  
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard ;  
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
And meant to stamp him with her master's mark ;  
And that he sinn'd, is not believable ;  
For, look upon his face ! — but if he sinn'd,  
The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,  
Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be :  
Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns  
Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.  
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more ? ”

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath ;  
“ O ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend ?  
Traitor or true ? that commerce with the Queen,  
I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,  
Or whisper'd in the corner ? do you know it ? ”

To which he answer'd sadly, “ Yea, I know it.  
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
To fetch her, and she took him for the King ;  
So fixt her fancy on him : let him be.  
But have you no one word of loyal praise  
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless man ?

She answer'd with a low and chuckling laugh ;  
“ Him ? is he man at all, who knows and winks ?  
Sees what his fair bride is and does, and winks ?

By which the good king means to blind himself,  
And blinds himself and all the Table Round  
To all the foulness that they work. Myself  
Could call him (were it not for womanhood)  
The pretty, popular name such manhood earns,  
Could call him the main cause of all their crime ;  
Yea, were he not crown'd king, coward, and fool.”

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing, said ;  
“ O true and tender ! O my liege and king !  
O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
Who wouldst against thine own eye-witness fain  
Have all men true and leal, all women pure ;  
How, in the mouths of base interpreters,  
From over-fineness not intelligible  
To things with every sense as false and foul  
As the poach'd filth that floods the middle street,  
Is thy white blamelessness accounted blame ! ”

But Vivien deeming Merlin overborne  
By instance, recommenced, and let her tongue  
Rage like a fire among the noblest names,  
Polluting, and imputing her whole self,  
Defaming and defacing, till she left  
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean.

Her words had issue other than she will'd.  
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and made  
A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,  
And mutter'd in himself, “ tell *her* the charm !  
So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
To snare the next, and if she have it not,  
So will she rail. What did the wanton say ?  
‘ Not mount as high ’ ; we scarce can sink as low :  
For men at most differ as Heaven and earth,  
But women, worst and best, as Heaven and Hell.  
I know the Table Round, my friends of old ;  
All brave, and many generous, and some chaste.



I think she cloaks the wounds of loss with  
lies ;

I do believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
She is so bitter : for fine plots may fail,  
Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face  
With colors of the heart that are not theirs.  
I will not let her know : nine tithes of  
times

Face-flatterers and backbiters are the  
same.

And they, sweet soul, that most impute  
a crime

Are prone to it, and impute themselves,  
Wanting the mental range ; or low desire  
Not to feel lowest makes them level all ;  
Yea, they would pare the mountain to  
the plain,

To leave an equal baseness ; and in this  
Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find  
Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
Not grieving that their greatest are so  
small,

Inflate themselves with some insane de-  
light,

And judge all nature from her feet of clay,  
Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual  
fire,

And touching other worlds. I am weary  
of her."

He spoke in words part heard, in whis-  
pers part,  
Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
And many-winter'd fleece of throat and  
chin.

But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his  
mood,  
And hearing "harlot" mutter'd twice or  
thrice,

Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood  
Stiff as a viper frozen ; loathsome sight,  
How from the rosy lips of life and love,  
Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of  
death !

White was her cheek ; sharp breaths of  
anger puff'd

Her fairy nostril out ; her hand half-  
clench'd

Went faltering sideways downward to her  
belt,

And feeling ; had she found a dagger there  
(For in a wink the false love turns to hate)  
She would have stabb'd him ; but she  
found it not :

His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
To bitter weeping like a beaten child,

A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
Then her false voice made way broken  
with sobs.

"O crueller than was ever told in tale,  
Or sung in song ! O vainly lavish'd love !  
O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,  
Or seeming shameful, for what shame in  
love,

So love be true, and not as yours is —  
nothing

Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust  
Who call'd her what he call'd her — all  
her crime,

All — all — the wish to prove him wholly  
hers."

She mused a little, and then clapt her  
hands

Together with a wailing shriek, and said :  
"Stabb'd through the heart's affections  
to the heart !

Seethed like the kid in its own mother's  
milk !

Kill'd with a word worse than a life of  
blows !

I thought that he was gentle, being great :  
O God, that I had loved a smaller man !  
I should have found in him a greater heart.  
O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
The knights, the court, the king, dark  
in your light,

Who love to make men darker than they  
are,

Because of that high pleasure which I had  
To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
Of worship — I am answer'd, and hence-  
forth

The course of life that seem'd so flowery  
to me

With you for guide and master, only you,  
Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken  
short,

And ending in a ruin — nothing left,  
But into some low cave to crawl, and there,  
If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness."

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung  
her head,

The snake of gold slid from her hair, the  
braid

Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,  
And the dark wood grew darker toward  
the storm

In silence, while his anger slowly died  
Within him, till he let his wisdom go



"Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood  
Stiff as a viper frozen."

For ease of heart, and half believed her true :

Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
"Come from the storm" and having no reply,

Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face

Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame ;

Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching terms

To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.  
Atlast she let herself be conquer'd by him,  
And as the cageling newly flown returns,  
Theseeeming-injured simple-hear'ed thing  
Came to her old perch back, and settled there.

There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,

Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw  
The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid yet,

About her, more in kindness than in love.  
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.  
But she dislink'd herself at once and rose.  
Her arms upon her breast across, and stood

A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
Upright and flush'd before him : then she said :

"There must be now no passages of love  
Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore.  
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,

What should be granted which your own  
 gross heart  
 Would reckon worth the taking? I will go.  
 In truth, but one thing now — better have  
 died  
 Thrice than have ask'd it once — could  
 make me stay —  
 That proof of trust — so often asked in  
 vain!  
 How justly, after that vile term of yours,  
 I find with grief! I might believe you  
 then,  
 Who knows? once more. O, what was  
 once to me  
 Mere matter of the fancy, now has grown  
 The vast necessity of heart and life.  
 Farewell; think kindly of me, for I fear  
 My fate or fault, omitting gayer youth  
 For one so old, must be to love you still.  
 But ere I leave you let me swear once  
 more  
 That if I schemed against your peace in  
 this,  
 May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er  
 me, send  
 One flash, that, missing all things else,  
 may make  
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie."

Scarce had she ceased, when out of  
 heaven a bolt  
 (For now the storm was close above them)  
 struck,  
 Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
 With darted spikes and splinters of the  
 wood  
 The dark earth round. He raised his eyes  
 and saw  
 The tree that shone white-listed thro' the  
 gloom.  
 But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her  
 oath,  
 And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,  
 And deafen'd with the stammering cracks  
 and claps  
 That follow'd, flying back and crying out,  
 "O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,  
 Yet save me!" clung to him and hugg'd  
 him close;  
 And call'd him dear protector in her fright,  
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,  
 But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd  
 him close.  
 The pale blood of the wizard at her touch  
 Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd.  
 She blamed herself for telling hearsay  
 tales:

She shook from fear, and for her fault she  
 wept  
 Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and  
 liege,  
 Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
 Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate  
 love  
 Of her whole life; and ever overhead  
 Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten  
 branch  
 Snapt in the rushing of the river rain  
 Above them; and in change of glare and  
 gloom  
 Her eyes and neck glittering went and  
 came;  
 Till now the storm, its burst of passion  
 spent,  
 Moaning and calling out of other lands,  
 Had left the ravaged woodland yet once  
 more  
 To peace; and what should not have  
 been had been,  
 For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
 Had yielded, told her all the charm, and  
 slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth  
 the charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
 And lost to life and use and name and  
 fame.

Then crying "I have made his glory  
 mine,"  
 And shrieking out "O fool!" the harlot  
 leapt  
 Adown the forest, and the thicket closed  
 Behind her, and the forest echo'd "fool."

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,  
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
 High in her chamber up a tower to the  
 east  
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;  
 Which first she placed where morning's  
 earliest ray  
 Might strike it, and awake her with the  
 gleam;  
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it  
 A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
 In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,  
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,



And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
 Nor rested thus content, but day by day  
 Leaving her household and good father  
 climb'd  
 That eastern tower, and entering barr'd  
 her door,  
 Stript off the case, and read the naked  
 shield,  
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his  
 arms,  
 Now made a pretty history to herself  
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
 And every scratch a lance had made upon  
 it,  
 Conjecturing when and where : this cut  
 is fresh ;  
 That ten years back ; this dealt him at  
 Caerlyle ;  
 That at Caerleon ; this at Camelot :  
 And ah God's mercy what a stroke was  
 there !  
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd,  
 but God  
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his  
 enemy down,  
 And saved him : so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good  
 shield  
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his  
 name ?  
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
 For the great diamond in the diamond  
 jousts,  
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that  
 name  
 Had named them, since a diamond was  
 the prize.

For Arthur long before they crown'd  
 him king,  
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-  
 nesse,  
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black  
 tarn.  
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
 Like its own mists to all the mountain  
 side :  
 For here two brothers, one a king, had  
 met  
 And fought together ; but their names  
 were lost.  
 And each had slain his brother at a  
 blow,  
 And down they fell and made the glen  
 abhorr'd :

And there they lay till all their bones  
 were bleach'd,  
 And lichen'd into color with the crags :  
 And he, that once was king, had on a crown  
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.  
 And Arthur came, and laboring up the  
 pass  
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and  
 the skull  
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull  
 the crown  
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn :  
 And down the shingly scaur he plunged,  
 and caught,  
 And set it on his head, and in his heart  
 Heard murmurs "lo, thou likewise shalt  
 be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had the  
 gems  
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them  
 to his knights,  
 Saying "these jewels, whereupon I  
 chanced  
 Divinely, are the kingdom's not the  
 king's —  
 For public use : henceforward let there be,  
 Once every year, a joust for one of these :  
 For so by nine years' proof we needs must  
 learn  
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves  
 shall grow  
 In use of arms and manhood, till we drive  
 The Heathen, who, some say, shall rule  
 the land  
 Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he  
 spoke :  
 And eight years past, eight jousts had  
 been, and still  
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the  
 year,  
 With purpose to present them to the  
 Queen,  
 When all were won ; but meaning all at  
 once  
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
 Worth half her realm, had never spoken  
 word.

Now for the central diamond and the  
 last  
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his court  
 Hard on the river nigh the place which  
 now  
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust



At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guine-  
vere

"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot  
move

To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she  
said, "ye know it."

"Then will ye miss," he answer'd,  
"the great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,  
A sight ye love to look on." And the  
Queen

Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the  
King.

He thinking that he read her meaning  
there,

"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is  
more

Than many diamonds," yielded, and a  
heart,

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen  
(However much he yearn'd to make com-  
plete

The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)  
Urged him to speak against the truth,  
and say,

"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hard-  
ly whole,

And lets me from the saddle"; and the  
King

Glanced first at him, then her, and went  
his way.

No sooner gone than suddenly she began.

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,  
much to blame.

Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the  
knights

Are half of them our enemies, and the  
crowd

Will murmur, lo the shameless ones, who  
take

Their pastime now the trustful king is  
gone!"

Then Lancelot vexed at having lied in vain:  
"Are ye so wise? ye were not once so  
wise,

My Queen, that summer, when ye loved  
me first.

Then of the crowd ye took no more ac-  
count

Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade  
of grass,

And every voice is nothing. As to knights,  
Them surely can I silence with all ease.

But now my loyal worship is allow'd  
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guine-  
vere,

The pearl of beauty: and our knights at  
feast

Have pledged us in this union, while the  
king

Would listen smiling. How then? is  
there more?

Has Arthur spoken aught? or would  
yourself,

Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh.

"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless  
King,

That passionate perfection, my good  
lord—

But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?  
He never spake word of reproach to me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
He cares not for me: only here to-day  
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his  
eyes:

Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with  
him—else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible,  
To make them like himself: but, friend,  
to me

He is all fault who hath no fault at all:  
For who loves me must have a touch of  
earth;

The low sun makes the color: I am yours,  
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the  
bond.

And therefore hear my words: go to the  
jousts:

The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our  
dream

When sweetest; and the vermin voices  
here

May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but  
they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights.

"And with what face, after my pretext  
made,

Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
Before a king who honors his own word,  
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,  
"A moral child without the craft to rule,

Else had he not lost me : but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit : we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at  
a touch

But knowing you are Lancelot ; your  
great name,

This conquers : hide it therefore ; go un-  
known :

Win ! by this kiss you will : and our  
true king

Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,  
As all for glory ; for to speak him true,  
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er  
he seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
He loves it in his knights more than  
himself :

They prove to him his work : win and  
return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wroth at himself : not willing to be  
known,

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,  
Chose the green path that show'd the  
rarer foot,

And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way ;  
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the dales  
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the  
towers.

Thither he made and wound the gateway  
horn.

Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrin-  
kled man,

Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless  
man ;

And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir  
Lavaine,

Moving to meet him in the castle court ;  
And close behind them stept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house  
There was not : some light jest among  
them rose

With laughter dying down as the great  
knight

Approach'd them : then the Lord of  
Astolat.



"Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,  
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd."

“Whence comest thou, my guest, and  
by what name  
Livest between the lips ? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of  
those,  
After the king, who eat in Arthur’s halls.  
Him have I seen : the rest, his Table  
Round,  
Known as they are, to me they are un-  
known.”

Then answer’d Lancelot, the chief of  
knights.  
“Known am I, and of Arthur’s hall, and  
known,  
What I by mere mischance have brought,  
my shield.  
But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,  
Hereafter you shall know me — and the  
shield —  
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not  
mine.”

Then said the Lord of Astolat, “Here  
is Torre’s :  
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir  
Torre.  
And so, God wot, his shield is blank  
enough.  
His ye can have.” Then added plain  
Sir Torre,  
“Yea since I cannot use it, ye may  
have it.”  
Here laugh’d the father saying “Fie, Sir  
Churl,  
Is that an answer for a noble knight?  
Allow him : but Lavaine, my younger here,  
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an  
hour  
And set it in this damsel’s golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before.”

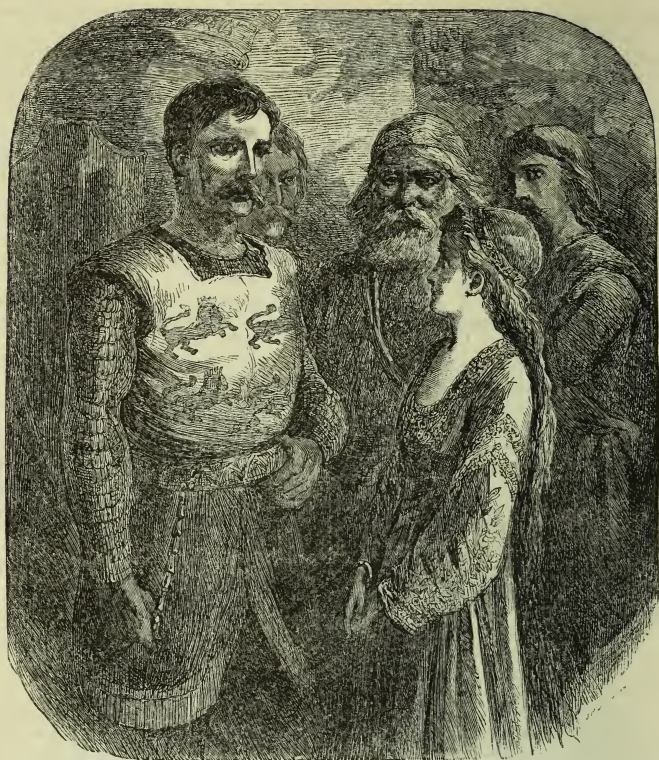
“Nay, father, nay good father, shame  
me not  
Before this noble knight” said young  
Lavaine  
“For nothing. Surely I but play’d on  
Torre :  
He seem’d so sullen, vext he could not go :  
A jest, no more : for, knight, the maiden  
dream,  
That some one put this diamond in her  
hand,  
And that it was too slippery to be held,

And slipt and fell into some pool or  
stream,  
The castle-well, belike ; and then I said  
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)  
Then must she keep it safelier. All was  
jest.  
But father give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight :  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win :  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best.”

“So ye will grace me,” answer’d  
Lancelot,  
Smiling a moment, “with your fellowship  
O’er these waste downs whereon I lost  
myself,  
Then were I glad of you as guide and  
friend ;  
And you shall win this diamond — as I  
hear,  
It is a fair large diamond, — if ye may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.”  
“A fair large diamond,” added plain  
Sir Torre,  
“Such be for Queens and not for simple  
maids.”  
Then she, who held her eyes upon the  
ground,  
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush’d slightly at the slight disparage-  
ment  
Before the stranger knight, who, looking  
at her,  
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return’d.  
“If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
And only Queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem  
this maid  
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like.”

He spoke and ceased : the lily maid  
Elaine,  
Won by the mellow voice before she look’d,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.  
The great and guilty love he bare the  
Queen,  
In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr’d his face, and mark’d it ere his  
time.  
Another sinning on such heights with one,  
The flower of all the west and all the  
world,  
Had been the sleeker for it : but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose  
And drove him into wastes and solitudes





“Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.”

For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest  
man,

That ever among ladies ate in Hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
However marr'd, of more than twice her  
years,

Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the  
cheek,

And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up  
her eyes

And loved him, with that love which was  
her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of  
the court,  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall

Stept with all grace, and not with half  
disdain

Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his kind :  
Whom they with meats and vintage of  
their best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
And much they ask'd of court and Table  
Round,

And ever well and readily answer'd he :  
But Lancelot, when they glanced at  
Guinevere,

Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
Heard from the Baron that, ten years  
before,

The heathen caught and reft him of his  
tongue.



“He learnt and warn’d me of their fierce  
design  
Against my house, and him they caught  
and maim’d ;  
But I my sons-and little daughter fled  
From bonds or death, and dwelt among  
the woods  
By the great river in a boatman’s hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur  
broke  
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.”

“O there, great Lord, doubtless,”  
Lavaïne said, rapt  
By all the sweet and sudden passion of  
youth  
Toward greatness in its elder, “you have  
fought.  
O tell us — for we live apart — you know  
Of Arthur’s glorious wars.” And Lan-  
celot spoke  
And answer’d him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent  
Glem ;  
And in the four wild battles by the shore  
Of Douglas ; that on Bassa ; then the war  
That thunder’d in and out the gloomy  
skirts  
Of Celidon the forest ; and again  
By castle Gurnion where the glorious King  
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady’s Head,  
Carved of one emerald, center’d in a sun  
Of silver rays, that lighten’d as he  
breathed ;  
And at Caerleon had he help’d his lord,  
When the strong neighbors of the wild  
white Horse  
Set every gilded parapet shuddering ;  
And up in Agned Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath  
Teroit,  
Where many a heathen fell ; “and on  
the mount  
Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them ; and I saw him, after,  
stand  
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume  
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried  
‘They are broken, they are broken’ for  
the King,  
However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the  
jousts —

For if his own knight cast him down, he  
laughs  
Saying, his knights are better men than  
he —  
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him : I never saw his like : there lives  
No greater leader.”

While he utter’d this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid  
“Save your great self, fair lord” ; and  
when he fell  
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —  
Being mirthful he but in a stately kind —  
She still took note that when the living  
smile  
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud  
Of melancholy severe, from which again,  
Whenever in her hovering to and fro  
The lily maid had striven to make him  
cheer,  
There brake a sudden-beaming tender-  
ness  
Of manners and of nature : and she thought  
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.  
And all night long his face before her lived,  
As when a painter, poring on a face,  
Divinely thro’ all hindrance finds the man  
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
The shape and color of a mind and life,  
Lives for his children, ever at its best  
And fullest ; so the face before her lived,  
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,  
full  
Of noble things, and held her from her  
sleep.  
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the  
thought  
She needs must bid farewell to sweet  
Lavaïne.  
First as in fear, step after step, she stole  
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating :  
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the  
court,  
“This shield, my friend, where is it ?”  
and Lavaïne  
Past inward, as she came from out the  
tower.  
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn’d,  
and smooth’d  
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.  
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she  
drew  
Nearer and stood. He look’d, and more  
amazed  
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw  
The maiden standing in the dewy light.  
He had not dream’d she was so beautiful.

Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,  
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood  
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.  
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,  
 That he should wear her favor at the tilt.  
 She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.  
 "Fair lord, whose name I know not —

noble it is,

I well believe, the noblest — will you wear  
 My favor at this tourney?" "Nay,"  
 said he,

"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
 Favor of any lady in the lists.

Such is my wont, as those, who know me,  
 know."

"Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wear-  
 ing mine

Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble  
 lord,

That those who know should know you."

And he turn'd

Hercounsel up and down within his mind,  
 And found it true, and answer'd, "true,  
 my child.

Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:  
 What is it?" and she told him "a red  
 sleeve

Broider'd with pearls," and brought it:  
 then he bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile  
 Saying, "I never yet have done so much  
 For any maiden living," and the blood  
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with de-  
 light;

But left her all the paler, when Lavaine  
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd  
 shield,

His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,  
 Who parted with his own to fair Elaine;  
 "Do me this grace, my child, to have my  
 shield

In keeping till I come." "A grace to  
 me,"

She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your  
 Squire."

Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily  
 maid,

For fear our people call you lily maid  
 In earnest, let me bring your color back;  
 Once, twice, and thrice: now get you  
 hence to bed":

So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own  
 hand,

And thus they moved away: she stay'd  
 a minute,

Then made a sudden step to the gate,  
 and there —

Her bright hair blown about the serious  
 face

Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —  
 Paused in the gateway, standing by the  
 shield

In silence, while she watch'd their arms  
 far-off

Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.  
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took  
 the shield,

There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past  
 away

Far o'er the long backs of the bushless  
 downs,

To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived  
 a knight

Not far from Camelot, now for forty years  
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and  
 pray'd

And ever laboring had scoop'd himself  
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff  
 cave,

And cells and chambers: all were fair  
 and dry;

The green light from the meadows under-  
 neath

Struck up and lived along the milky  
 roofs;

And in the meadows tremulous aspen-  
 trees

And poplars made a noise of falling  
 showers.

And thither wending there that night  
 they bode.

But when the next day broke from un-  
 derground,

And shot red fire and shadows thro' the  
 cave,

They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and  
 rode away:

Then Lancelot saying, "hear, but hold  
 my name

Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the  
 Lake,"

Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant rever-  
 ence,

Dearer to true young hearts than their  
 own praise,

But left him leave to stammer, "is it  
 indeed?"

And after muttering "the great Lancelot"  
 At last he got his breath and answer'd

"One,



"Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,  
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy."

One have I seen — that other, our liege  
lord,  
The dread Pendragon, Britain's king of  
kings,  
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
He will be there — then were I stricken  
blind  
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they  
reach'd the lists  
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half  
round  
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,  
Until they found the clear-faced King,  
who sat

Robed in red samite, easily to be known,  
Since to his crown the golden dragon  
clung,

And down his robe the dragon writhed  
in gold,

And from the carven-work behind him  
crept

Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make  
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of  
them

Thro' knots and loops and folds innumer-  
able

Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they  
found

The new design wherein they lost them-  
selves,

Yet with all ease, so tender was the work :



And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless  
king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine  
and said,

"Me you call great : mine is the firmer  
seat,

The truer lance : but there is many a youth  
Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
And overcome it ; and in me there dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off  
touch

Of greatness to know well I am not great :  
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped  
upon him

As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
The trumpets blew ; and then did either  
side,

They that assail'd, and they that held  
the lists,

Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly  
move,

Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
Shock, that a man far-off might well per-  
ceive,

If any man that day were left afield,  
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder  
of arms.

And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
Which were the weaker ; then he hurl'd  
into it

Against the stronger : little need to speak  
Of Lancelot in his glory : King, duke, earl,  
Count, baron — whom he smote, he over-  
threw.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith  
and kin,

Ranged with the Table Round that held  
the lists,

Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger  
knight

Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot ; and one said to the other  
"Lo !

What is he ? I do not mean the force  
alone,

The grace and versatility of the man —  
Is it not Lancelot !" "When has Lancelot worn

Favor of any lady in the lists ?  
Not such his wont, as we, that know him,  
know."

"How then ? who then ?" a fury seized  
on them,

A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.

They couch'd their spears and prick'd  
their steeds and thus,

Their plumes driv'n backward by the  
wind they made

In moving, all together down upon him  
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,  
Green-glimmering toward the summit,  
bears, with all

Its stormy crests that smoke against the  
skies,

Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
And him that helms it, so they overbore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
Down-glancing, lamed the charger, and a  
spear

Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the  
head

Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,  
and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worship-  
fully ;

He bore a knight of old repute to the  
earth,

And brought his horse to Lancelot where  
he lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
But thought to do while he might yet  
endure,

And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
His party, — tho' it seemed half-miracle  
To those he fought with — drave his kith  
and kin,

And all the Table Round that held the  
lists,

Back to the barrier ; then the heralds  
blew

Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the  
sleeve

Of scarlet, and the pearls ; and all the  
knights,

His party, cried "Advance, and take  
your prize

The diamond" ; but he answer'd, "dia-  
mond me

No diamonds ! for God's love, a little air !  
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death !  
Hence will I and I charge you, follow me  
not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from  
the field

With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.  
There from his charger down he slid, and  
sat,

Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "draw the lance-  
head" :



"Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,

"I dread me, if I draw it, ye will die."

But he "I die already with it : draw — Draw," — and Lavaine drew, and that other gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,

And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.

Then came the hermit out and bare him in, There stanch'd his wound ; and there, in daily doubt

Whether to live or die, for many a week Hid from the wide world's rumor by the grove

Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,

And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,

His party, knights of utmost North and West,

Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,

Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him

"Lo, Sire, our knight thro' whom we won the day

Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize

Untaken, crying that his prize is death."

"Heaven hinder," said the King, "that such an one,

So great a knight as we have seen to-day —

He seem'd to me another Lancelot — Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot —

He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore rise,

O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.

Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.

I charge you that you get at once to horse. And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you

Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given :

His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him

No customary honor : since the knight Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,

Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take

This diamond, and deliver it, and return, And bring us where he is and how he fares, And cease not from your quest, until you find."

So saying from the carven flower above, To which it made a restless heart, he took, And gave, the diamond : then from where he sat

At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose, With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince

In the mid night and flourish of his May, Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,

And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint And Lamorack, a good knight, but there-withal

Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house, Nor often loyal to his word, and now Wroth that the king's command to sally forth

In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave

The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went ; While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,

Past, thinking "is it Lancelot who has come

Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain Of glory, and has added wound to wound, And ridd'n away to die ?" So fear'd the King,

And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.

Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,

"Love, are you yet so sick ?" "Nay, lord," she said.

"And where is Lancelot ?" Then the Queen amazed

"Was he not with you ? won he not your prize ?"

"Nay, but one like him." "Why that like was he."

And when the King demanded how she knew,

Said "Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us,

Than Lancelot told me of a common talk That men went down before his spear at a touch,

But knowing he was Lancelot ; his great  
name  
Conquer'd ; and therefore would he hide  
his name  
From all men, ev'n the king, and to this end  
Had made the pretext of a hindering  
wound,  
That he might joust unknown of all, and  
learn  
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd :  
And added, 'our true Arthur, when he  
learns,  
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory.'"

Then replied the King :  
"Farlovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
To have trusted me as he has trusted you.  
Surely his king and most familiar friend  
Might well have kept his secret. True,  
indeed,  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have moved my laughter :  
now remains  
But little cause for laughter : his own  
kin —  
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him,  
these !  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon  
him ;  
So that he went sore wounded from the  
field :  
Yet good news too : for goodly hopes are  
mine  
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.  
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm  
A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with great  
pearls,  
Some gentle maiden's gift."

"Yea, lord," she said,  
"Your hopes are mine," and saying that  
she choked,  
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,  
Past to her chamber, and there flung  
herself  
Down on the great King's couch, and  
writhed upon it,  
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the  
palm,  
And shriek'd out "traitor" to the un-  
hearing wall,  
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose  
again,  
And moved about her palace, proud and  
pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region  
round  
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the  
quest,  
Touch'd at all points, except the poplar  
grove,  
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat :  
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the  
maid  
Glanced at, and cried "What news from  
Camelot, lord ?  
What of the knight with the red sleeve ?"  
"He won."  
"I knew it," she said. "But parted  
from the jousts  
Hurt in the side," whereat she caught  
her breath ;  
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance  
go ;  
Thereon she smote her hand : wellnigh  
she swoon'd :  
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her,  
came  
The lord of Astolat out, to whom the  
Prince  
Reported who he was, and on what quest  
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not  
find  
The victor, but had ridden wildly round  
To seek him, and was wearied of the search.  
To whom the lord of Astolat "Bide with  
us,  
And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince !  
Here was the knight, and here he left a  
shield ;  
This will he send or come for : further-  
more  
Our son is with him ; we shall hear anon,  
Needs must we hear." To this the cour-  
teous Prince  
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
And stay'd ; and cast his eyes on fair  
Elaine :  
Where could be found face daintier ?  
then her shape  
From forehead down to foot perfect —  
again  
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :  
"Well — if I bide, lo ! this wild flower  
for me !"  
And oft they met among the garden yews,  
And there he set himself to play upon  
her  
With sallying wit, free flashes from a  
heighth  
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,

Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence

And amorous adulation, till the maid  
Rebell'd against it, saying to him,  
"Prince,

O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
Whence you might learn his name?

Why slight your King,  
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove

No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
Who lost the hern we slipt him at, and went

To all the winds?" "Nay, by mine head," said he,

"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes :  
But an ye will it let me see the shield."

And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw

Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,

Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,  
and mock'd ;

"Right was the King! our Lancelot!  
that true man!"

"And right was I," she answer'd merrily, "I,

Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all."

"And if I dream'd," said Gawain, "that you love

This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, you know it!

Speak therefore : shall I waste myself in vain?"

Full simple was her answer "What know I?

My brethren have been all my fellowship,  
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,

Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,

Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so myself—

I know not if I know what true love is,  
But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
Methinks there is none other I can love."

"Yea, by God's death," said he, "ye love him well,

But would not, knew ye what all others know,

And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,

And lifted her fair face and moved away :  
But he pursued her calling "Stay a little!

One golden minute's grace : he wore your sleeve :

Would he break faith with one I may not name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at last?

Nay—like enough : why then, far be it from me

To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!  
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well

Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave

My quest with you ; the diamond also : here!

For if you love, it will be sweet to give it ;  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it

From your own hand ; and whether he love or not,

A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two  
May meet at court hereafter : there, I think,

So you will learn the courtesies of the court,

We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,  
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he

gave,  
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest

Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went

A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past ; there told the King

What the King knew "Sir Lancelot is the knight"

And added "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt ;

But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all round  
The region : but I lighted on the maid,

Whose sleeve he wore ; she loves him ; and to her,

Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,  
I gave the diamond : she will render it ;

For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,

"Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more

On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget  
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth but all  
 in awe,  
 For twenty strokes of the blood, without  
 a word,  
 Linger'd that other, staring after him ;  
 Then shook his hair, strode off, and  
 buzz'd abroad  
 About the maid of Astolat, and her love.  
 All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues  
 were loosed :  
 "The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,  
 Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."  
 Some read the King's face, some the  
 Queen's, and all  
 Had marvel what the maid might be, but  
 most  
 Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old  
 dame  
 Came suddenly on the Queen with the  
 sharp news.  
 She, that had heard the noise of it before,  
 But sorrowing Lancelot should have  
 stoop'd so low,  
 Marr'd her friend's point with pale tran-  
 quillity.  
 So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
 Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder  
 flared :  
 Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or  
 thrice  
 Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the  
 Queen,  
 And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
 Smiled at each other, while the Queen  
 who sat  
 With lips severely placid felt the knot  
 Climb in her throat, and with her feet  
 unseen  
 Crush'd the wild passion on against the  
 floor  
 Beneath the banquet, where the meats  
 became  
 As wormwood, and she hated all who  
 pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
 Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
 The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her  
 heart,  
 Crept to her father, while he mused alone,  
 Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and  
 said,  
 "Father, you call me wilful, and the  
 fault  
 Is yours who let me have my will, and now,  
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my  
 wits?"

"Nay," said he, "surely." "Where-  
 fore, let me hence,"  
 She answer'd, "and find out our dear  
 Lavaine."  
 "Ye will not lose your wits for dear  
 Lavaine :  
 Bide," answer'd he : "we needs must  
 hear anon  
 Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she  
 said,  
 "And of that other, for I needs must hence  
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
 And with mine own hand give his diamond  
 to him,  
 Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
 As yon proud Prince who left the quest  
 to me.  
 Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's said.  
 The gentler-born the maiden, the more  
 bound,  
 My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,  
 When these have worn their tokens : let  
 me hence  
 I pray you." Then her father nodding  
 said,  
 "Ay, ay, the diamond : wit you well, my  
 child,  
 Right fain were I to learn this knight  
 were whole,  
 Being our greatest : yea, and you must  
 give it—  
 And sure I think this fruit is hung too high  
 For any mouth to gape for save a Queen's—  
 Nay, I mean nothing : so then, get you  
 gone,  
 Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, hersuit allow'd, she slept away,  
 And while she made her ready for her ride,  
 Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,  
 "Being so very wilful you must go,"  
 And changed itself and echoed in her  
 heart,  
 "Being so very wilful you must die."  
 But she was happy enough and shook it off,  
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us ;  
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
 "What matter, so I help him back to  
 life?"  
 Then faraway with good Sir Torre for guide  
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless  
 downs  
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
 Came on her brother with a happy face



Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers :  
 Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she  
 cried, "Lavaine,  
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He  
 amazed,  
 "Torre and Elaine ! why here ? Sir Lan-  
 celot !  
 How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot ?"  
 But when the maid had told him all her  
 tale,  
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his  
 moods  
 Left them, and under the strange-statued  
 gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mys-  
 tically,  
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,  
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Came-  
 lot ;  
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove  
 Led to the caves : there first she saw the  
 casque  
 Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls  
 away,  
 Stream'd from it still ; and in her heart  
 she laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to tour-  
 ney in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell in which  
 he slept,  
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty  
 hands  
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made them  
 move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek,  
 unshorn,  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Uttered a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wonted in a place so still  
 Woke the sick knight, and wail'd he roll'd  
 his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him,  
 saying  
 "Your prize the diamond sent you by  
 the King" :  
 His eyes glister'd : she fancied "is it for  
 me ?"  
 And when the maid had told him all the  
 tale  
 Of King and Prince, the diamond sent,  
 the quest  
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt  
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,

And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child  
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her  
 face.  
 At once she slept like water to the floor.  
 "Alas," he said, "your ride has wearied  
 you.  
 Rest must you have." "No rest for  
 me," she said ;  
 "Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."  
 What might she mean by that ? his large  
 black eyes,  
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon  
 her,  
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself  
 In the heart's colors on her simple face ;  
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplex'd in  
 mind,  
 And being weak in body said no more ;  
 But did not love the color ; woman's love,  
 Save one, he not regarded, and so  
 turn'd  
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.  
 Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the  
 fields,  
 And past beneath the wildly-sculptured  
 gates  
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin ;  
 There bode the night : but woke with  
 dawn, and past  
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,  
 Thence to the cave : so day by day she past  
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
 And likewise many a night : and Lancelot  
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little  
 hurt  
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at  
 times  
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem  
 Uncourteous, even he : but the meek maid  
 Sweetly forebore him ever, being to him  
 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
 Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
 And never woman yet, since man's first  
 fall,  
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love  
 Upbore her ; till the hermit, skill'd in all  
 The simples and the science of that time,  
 Told him that her fine care had saved his  
 life.  
 And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet  
 Elaine,  
 Would listen for her coming and regret  
 Her parting step, and held her tenderly.



"She knelt  
Full lowly by the corners of his bed."

And loved her with all love except the love  
Of man and woman when they love their  
best  
Closest and sweetest, and had died the  
death  
In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
And peradventure had he seen her first  
She might have made this and that other  
world  
Another world for the sick man ; but now  
The shackles of an old love straiten'd  
him,  
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,  
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

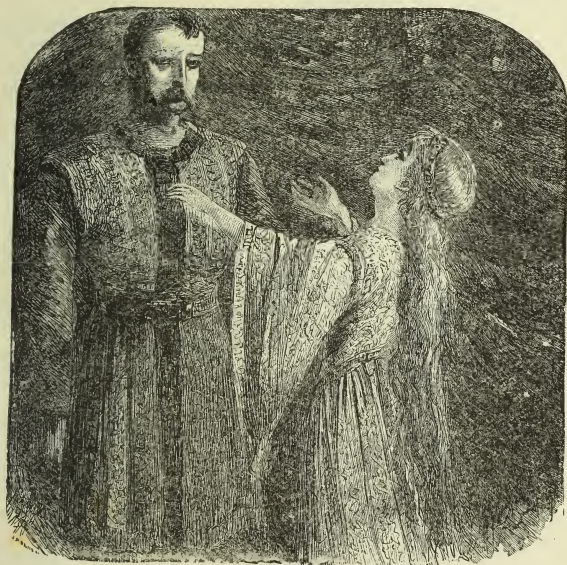
Yet the great knight in his mid-sick-  
ness made  
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
These, as but born of sickness, could not  
live :  
For when the blood ran lustier in him  
again,  
Full often the sweet image of one face,  
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly  
grace  
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd  
not,  
Or short and coldly, and she knew right  
well  
What the rough sickness meant, but what  
this meant  
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd  
her sight,  
And drove her ere her time across the fields  
Far into the rich city, where alone  
She murmur'd "vain, in vain : it can-  
not be.  
He will not love me : how then ? must  
I die."  
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
That has but one plain passage of few notes,  
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
For all an April morning, till the ear  
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
Went half the night repeating, "must  
I die ?"  
And now to right she turn'd, and now  
to left,

And found no ease in turning or in rest ;  
And "him or death" she mutter'd,  
"death or him,"  
Again and like a burthen, "him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt  
was whole,  
To Astolat returning rode the three.  
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet  
self  
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd  
her best,  
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she  
thought  
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."  
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid  
That she should ask some goodly gift of  
him  
For her own self or hers ; "and do not shun  
To speak the wish most dear to your  
true heart ;  
Such service have ye done me, that I  
make  
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I  
In mine own land, and what I will I can."  
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,

But like a ghost without the power to  
speak.  
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her  
wish,  
And bode among them yet a little space  
Til he should learn it ; and one morn  
it chanced  
He found her in among the garden yews,  
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your  
wish,  
Seeing I must go to-day" : then out she  
brake ;  
"Going ? and we shall never see you more.  
And I must die for want of one bold word."  
"Speak : that I live to hear," he said,  
"is yours."  
Then suddenly and passionately she  
spoke :  
"I have gone mad. I love you : let  
me die."  
"Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot, "what  
is this ?"  
And innocently extending her white arms,  
"Your love," she said, "your love — to  
be your wife."  
And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chos'n  
to wed,



Then suddenly and passionately she spoke."



I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine :  
But now there never will be wife of mine."

"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be  
wife,

But to be with you still, to see your face,  
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the  
world."

And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the  
world, the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue  
To blare its own interpretation — nay,  
Full ill then should I quit your brother's  
love,

And your good father's kindness." And  
she said

"Not to be with you, not to see your face —  
Alas for me then, my good days are done."

"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten  
times nay !

This is not love : but love's first flash in  
youth,

Most common : yea I know it of mine  
own self :

And you yourself will smile at your own  
self

Hereafter, when you yield your flower  
of life

To one more fitly yours, not thrice your  
age :

And then will I, for true you are and  
sweet

Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
More specially should your good knight  
be poor,

Endow you with broad land and territory  
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,  
So that would make you happy : further-  
more,

Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my  
blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke  
She neither blush'd nor shook, but  
deathly-pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then  
replied :

"Of all this will I nothing" ; and so fell,  
And thus they bore her swooning to her  
tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black  
walls of yew

Their talk had pierced, her father. "Ay,  
a flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.  
Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.  
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy  
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,  
"That were against me : what I can I  
will" ;

And there that day remain'd, and toward  
even

Sent for his shield : full meekly rose the  
maid,

Stript off the case, and gave the naked  
shield ;

Then, when she heard his horse upon  
the stones,

Unclassing flung the casement back, and  
look'd

Down on his helm, from which her sleeve  
had gone.

And Lancelot knew the little clinking  
sound ;

And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking  
at him.

And yet he glanced not up, nor waved  
his hand,

Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.  
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat :  
His very shield was gone ; only the case,  
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.  
But still she heard him, still his picture  
form'd

And grew between her and the pictured  
wall.

Then came her father, saying in low tones  
"Have comfort," whom she greeted  
quietly.

Then came her brethren saying, "Peace  
to thee

Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with  
all calm.

But when they left her to herself again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant  
field

Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd ;  
the owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt  
Her fancies with the fallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,  
And call'd her song "The Song of Love  
and Death,"

And sang it : sweetly could she make  
and sing.



"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain,  
in vain ;  
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain :  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet ? then bitter  
death must be :  
Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death to me.  
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to  
fade away,  
Sweet death, that seems to make us love-  
less clay,  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could  
be ;  
I needs must follow death, who calls for  
me ;  
Call and I follow, I follow ! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice,  
and this,  
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers heard,  
and thought  
With shuddering "Hark the Phantom  
of the house  
That ever shrieks before a death," and  
call'd  
The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
Ran to her, and lo ! the blood-red light of  
dawn  
Flared on her face, she shrilling "Let  
me die !"

As when we dwell upon a word we  
know  
Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder and we know not why,  
So dwelt the father on her face and thought  
"Is this Elaine ?" till back the maiden  
fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,  
Speaking a still good-morrow with her  
eyes.  
At last she said "Sweet brothers, yester-  
night  
I seem'd a curious little maid again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among the  
woods,  
And when ye used to take me with the  
flood  
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.  
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it : there ye fixt

Your limit, oft returning with the tide.  
And yet I cried because ye would not pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the king.  
And yet ye would not ; but this night  
I dream'd  
That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said "Now shall I have my  
will" :  
And there I woke, but still the wish re-  
main'd.  
So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,  
Until I find the palace of the king.  
There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock at me ;  
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at  
me,  
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at  
me ;  
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells  
to me,  
Lancelot, who coldly went nor bade me  
one :  
And there the King will know me and  
my love,  
And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
And after my long voyage I shall rest !"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child,  
ye seem  
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go,  
So far, being sick ? and wherefore would  
ye look  
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us  
all ?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave  
and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobs and say  
"I never loved him : an I meet with him,  
I care not howsoever great he be,  
Then will I strike at him and strike him  
down,  
Give me good fortune, I will strike him  
dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the  
house."

To which the gentle sister made reply,  
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be  
wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault  
Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the  
highest."

"Highest?" the Father answer'd,  
 echoing "highest?"  
 (He meant to break the passion in her)  
 "nay,  
 Daughter, I know not what you call the  
 highest;  
 But this I know, for all the people know it,  
 He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:  
 And she returns his love in open shame.  
 If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat;  
 "Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
 For anger: these are slanders: never yet  
 Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
 He makes no friend who never made a  
 foe.

But now it is my glory to have loved  
 One peerless, without stain: so let me  
 pass,

My father, howsoever I seem to you,  
 Not all unhappy, having loved God's best  
 And greatest, tho' my love had no return:  
 Yet, seeing ye desire your child to live,  
 Thanks, but ye work against your own  
 desire;

For if I could believe the things ye say  
 I should but die the sooner; wherefore  
 cease,

Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
 Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and  
 die."

So when the ghostly man had come  
 and gone,  
 She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
 Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
 A letter, word for word; and when he  
 ask'd

"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?  
 Then will I bear it gladly"; she replied,  
 "For Lancelot and the Queen and all  
 the world,

But I myself must bear it." Then he  
 wrote

The letter she devised; which being writ  
 And folded, "O sweet father, tender and  
 true,

Deny me not," she said — "ye never yet  
 Denied my fancies — this, however  
 strange,

My latest: lay the letter in my hand  
 A little ere I die, and close the hand  
 Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.  
 And when the heat is gone from out my  
 heart,

Then take the little bed on which I died

For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the  
 Queen's

For richness, and me also like the Queen  
 In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
 And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
 To take me to the river, and a barge  
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
 There surely I shall speak for mine own  
 self,

And none of you can speak for me so well.  
 And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
 Go with me, he can steer and row, and he  
 Will guide me to that palace, to the  
 doors."

She ceased: her father promised;  
 whereupon

She grew so cheerful that they deem'd  
 her death

Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
 But ten slow mornings past, and on the  
 eleventh

Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
 And closed the hand upon it, and she died.  
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from  
 underground,

Then, those two brethren slowly with  
 bent brows

Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that  
 shone

Full-summer, to that stream whereon the  
 barge,

Pall'd all its length in blackest samite,  
 lay.

There sat the lifelong creature of the  
 house,

Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
 So those two brethren from the chariot  
 took

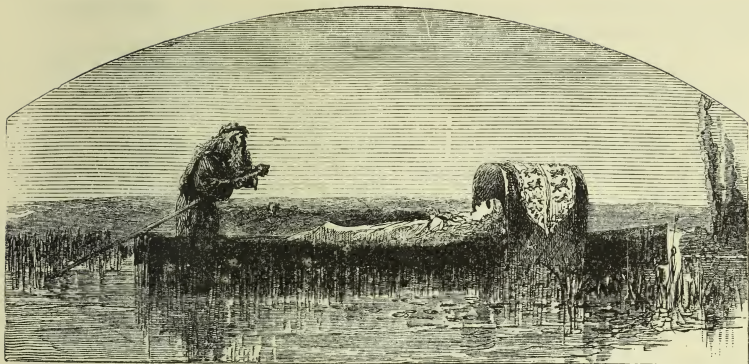
And on the black decks laid her in her  
 bed,

Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
 The silken case with braided blazonings,  
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying  
 to her

"Sister, farewell for ever," and again  
 "Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in  
 tears.

Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the  
 dead

Steer'd by the dumb went upward with  
 the flood —



"Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead  
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood."

In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter — all her bright hair stream-  
ing down —

And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in  
white

All but her face, and that clear-featured  
face

Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace  
craved

Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise  
and blow,

With deaths of others, and almost his  
own,

The nine-years-fought-for diamonds : for  
he saw

One of her house, and sent him to the Queen  
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen  
agreed

With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seem'd her statue, but  
that he,

Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her  
feet

For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the  
walls,

And parted, laughing in his courtly  
heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the  
stream,

They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd,  
"Queen,

Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making  
them

An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's : these are  
words :

Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it  
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin  
in words

Perchance, we both can pardon : but, my  
Queen,

I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.  
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,  
Should have in it an absoluter trust  
To make up that defect : let rumors be :  
When did not rumors fly ? these, as I trust  
That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away,  
the Queen

Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,  
Till all the place whereon she stood was  
green ;

Then, when he ceased, in one cold pas-  
sive hand

Received at once and laid aside the gems  
There on a table near her, and replied.

“It may be, I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.  
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.  
This good is in it, whatsoe’er of ill,  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite and  
wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are  
these ?

Diamonds for me ! they had been thrice  
their worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your own.  
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver’s. Not for me !  
For her ! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you : have your joys  
apart.

I doubt not that however changed, you  
keep

So much of what is graceful : and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of  
courtesy

In which as Arthur’s queen I move and  
rule :

So cannot speak my mind. An end to this !  
A strange one ! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her  
pearls ;

Deck her with these ; tell her she shines  
me down :

An armlet for an arm to which the Queen’s  
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
O as much fairer — as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds — hers  
not mine —

Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my  
will —

She shall not have them.”

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro’ the casement standing wide  
for heat,  
Flung them, and down they flash’d, and  
smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash’d, as  
it were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past  
away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half  
disgust

At love, life, all things, on the window  
ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right across

Where these had fallen, slowly past the  
barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst  
away

To weep and wail in secret ; and the barge,  
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.  
There two stood arm’d, and kept the  
door ; to whom,

All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes  
that ask’d

“What is it ?” but that oarsman’s hag-  
gard face,

As hard and still as is the face that men  
Shape to their fancy’s eye from broken  
rocks

On some cliff-side, appall’d them, and  
they said,

“He is enchanted, cannot speak — and  
she,

Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen,  
so fair !

Yea, but how pale ! what are they ?  
flesh and blood ?

Or come to take the King to fairy land ?  
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
But that he passes into fairy land.”

While thus they babbled of the King,  
the King

Came girt with knights : then turn’d  
the tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and rose  
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.  
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale  
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid ;  
And reverently they bore her into hall.

Then came the fine Gawain and wonder’d  
at her,

And Lancelot later came and mused at her,  
And last the Queen herself and pitied her :  
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it ;  
this was all.

“Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the  
Lake,

I, sometime call’d the maid of Astolat,  
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
I loved you, and my love had no return,  
And therefore my true love has been my  
death.

And therefore to our lady Guinevere,



And to all other ladies, I make moan.  
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read,  
And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who read  
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that  
her lips,  
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them  
all ;  
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that  
hear,  
Know that for this most gentle maiden's  
death  
Right heavy am I ; for good she was and  
true,

But loved me with a love beyond all love  
In women, whomsoever I have known.  
Yet to be loved makes not to love again ;  
Not at my years, however it hold in  
youth.

I swear by truth and knighthood that I  
gave

No cause, not willingly, for such a love :  
To this I call my friends in testimony,  
Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and  
use,

To break her passion, some discourtesy  
Against my nature : what I could, I did.  
I left her and I bade her no farewell.

Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would  
have died,

I might have put my wits to some rough  
use,

And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen  
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after  
storm)

"Ye might at least have done her so  
much grace,

Fair lord, as would have help'd her from  
her death."

He raised his head, their eyes met and  
hers fell,

He adding,

"Queen, she would not be content  
Save that I wedded her, which could  
not be.

Then might she follow me thro' the world,  
she ask'd ;

It could not be. I told her that her love  
Was but the flash of youth, would dark-  
en down

To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
Toward one more worthy of her — then  
would I,

More specially were he, she wedded, poor,  
Estate them with large land and territory  
In mine own realm beyond the narrow  
seas,

To keep them in all joyance : more than  
this

I could not ; this she would not, and she  
died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my  
knight,

It will be to thy worship, as my knight,  
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all  
the realm

Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went  
The marshal'd order of their Table Round,  
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
And mass, and rolling music, like a  
Queen.

And when the knights had laid her  
comely head

Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let  
her tomb

Be costly, and her image thereupon.

And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet  
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.

And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb  
In letters gold and azure !" which was  
wrought

Thereafter ; but when now the lords and  
dames

And people, from the high door stream-  
ing, brake

Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he  
moved apart,

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing "Lance-  
lot,

Forgive me ; mine was jealousy in love."  
He answer'd with his eyes upon the  
ground,

"That is love's curse ; pass on, my  
Queen, forgiven."

But Arthur who beheld his cloudy brows

Approach'd him, and with full affection  
flung  
One arm about his neck, and spake and  
said.

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in  
whom I have  
Most love and most affiance, for I know  
What thou hast been in battle by my side,  
And many a time have watched thee at  
the tilt  
Strike down the lusty and long-practised  
knight,  
And let the younger and unskill'd go by  
To win his honor and to make his name,  
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man  
Made to be loved; but now I would  
to God,  
For the wild people say wild things of  
thee,  
Thou couldst have loved this maiden,  
shaped, it seems,  
By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
If one may judge the living by the dead,  
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
Who might have brought thee, now a  
lonely man  
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the  
Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she  
was, my King,  
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.  
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a  
heart —  
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
Could bind him, but free love will not  
be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest,"  
said the King.  
"Let love be free; free love is for the best:  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of  
death,  
What should be best, if not so pure a love  
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee  
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,  
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but  
he went,  
And at the inrunning of a little brook  
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes

And saw the barge that brought her mov-  
ing down,  
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
Low in himself "Ah simple heart and  
sweet,

Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a  
love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for  
thy soul?

Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at  
last —

Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love'?  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous  
pride?

Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,  
May not your crescent fear for name and  
fame

Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?  
Why did the King dwell on my name to  
me?

Mine own name shames me, seeming a  
reproach,

Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
Stole from his mother — as the story  
runs —

She chanted snatches of mysterious song  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and  
morn

She kiss'd me saying thou art fair, my  
child,

As a king's son, and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.  
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er  
it be!

For what am I? what profits me my  
name

Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and  
have it:

Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;  
Now grown a part of me: but what use  
in it?

To make men worse by making my sin  
known?

Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?  
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must  
break

These bonds that so defame me: not with-  
out

She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? nay,  
Who knows? but if I would not, then  
may God,

I pray him, send a sudden Angel down  
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,  
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,  
Among the tumbled fragments of the  
hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful  
pain,  
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

## THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess  
done  
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,  
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd  
The Pure,  
Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,  
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for  
the cowl  
The helmet in an abbey far away  
From Camelot, there, and not long after,  
died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,  
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the  
rest,  
And honor'd him, and wrought into his  
heart  
A way by love that waken'd love within,  
To answer that which came: and as they  
sat  
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening  
half  
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn  
That puff'd the swaying branches into  
smoke  
Above them, ere the summer when he died,  
The monk Ambrosius question'd Perci-  
vale:

"O brother, I have seen this yew-tree  
smoke,  
Spring after spring, for half a hundred  
years:  
For never have I known the world without,  
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale: but thee,  
When first thou camest — such a courtesy  
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice —  
I knew  
For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;  
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,  
Some true, some light, but every one of you  
Stamp'd with the image of the King; and  
now  
Tell me, what drove thee from the Table  
Round,  
My brother? was it earthly passion crost?"

"Nay," said the knight; "for no such  
passion mine.  
But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail

Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,  
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle  
out  
Among us in the jousts, while women  
watch  
Who wins, who falls; and waste the  
spiritual strength  
Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven."

To whom the monk: "The Holy  
Grail! — I trust  
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here  
too much  
We moulder — as to things without I  
mean —  
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of  
ours,  
Told us of this in our refectory,  
But spake with such a sadness and so low  
We heard not half of what he said. What  
is it?  
The phantom of a cup that comes and  
goes?"

"Nay, monk! what phantom?" an-  
swer'd Percivale.  
"The cup, the cup itself, from which our  
Lord  
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.  
This, from the blessed land of Aromat —  
After the day of darkness, when the dead  
Went wandering o'er Moriah — the good  
saint,  
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought  
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn  
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our  
Lord.  
And there awhile it bode; and if a man  
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,  
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times  
Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
Was caught away to Heaven, and disap-  
pear'd."

To whom the monk: "From our old  
books I know  
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,  
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,  
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to  
build;  
And there he built with wattles from the  
marsh  
A little lonely church in days of yore,  
For so they say, these books of ours, but  
seem  
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.  
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?"

"A woman," answer'd Percivale, "a  
 nun,  
 And one no further off in blood from me  
 Than sister ; and if ever holy maid  
 With knees of adoration wore the stone,  
 A holy maid ; tho' never maiden glow'd,  
 But that was in her earlier maidenhood,  
 With such a fervent flame of human love,  
 Which being rudely blunted, glanced and  
 shot  
 Only to holy things ; to prayer and praise  
 She gave herself, to fast and alms. And  
 yet,  
 Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,  
 Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,  
 And the strange sound of an adulterous  
 race,  
 Across the iron grating of her cell  
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the  
 more.

"And he to whom she told her sins,  
 or what  
 Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,  
 A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
 Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
 A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
 And each of these a hundred winters old,  
 From our Lord's time. And when King  
 Arthur made  
 His Table Round, and all men's hearts  
 became  
 Clean for a season, surely he had thought  
 That now the Holy Grail would come  
 again ;  
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it  
 would come,  
 And heal the world of all their wicked-  
 ness !  
 'O Father !' asked the maiden, 'might  
 it come  
 To me by prayer and fasting ?' 'Nay,'  
 said he,  
 'I know not, for thy heart is pure as  
 snow.'  
 And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun  
 Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and  
 I thought  
 She might have risen and floated when I  
 saw her.

"For on a day she sent to speak with  
 me.  
 And when she came to speak, behold her  
 eyes  
 Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
 Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,

Beautiful in the light of holiness.  
 And 'O my brother, Percivale,' she said,  
 'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy  
 Grail :  
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound  
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
 Blown, and I thought, "It is not Arthur's  
 use  
 To hunt by moonlight " ; and the slender  
 sound  
 As from a distance beyond distance grew  
 Coming up on me — O never harp nor  
 horn,  
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch  
 with hand,  
 Was like that music as it came ; and then  
 Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver  
 beam,  
 And down the long beam stole the Holy  
 Grail,  
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,  
 Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed  
 With rosy colors leaping on the wall ;  
 And then the music faded, and the Grail  
 Pass'd, and the beam decay'd, and from  
 the walls  
 The rosy quiverings died into the night.  
 So now the Holy Thing is here again  
 Among us, brother, fast thou too and  
 pray,  
 And tell thy brother knights to fast and  
 pray,  
 That so perchance the vision may be seen  
 By thee and those, and all the world be  
 heal'd.'

"Then leaving the pale nun, I spake  
 of this  
 To all men ; and myself fasted and pray'd  
 Always, and many among us many a week  
 Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,  
 Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"And one there was among us, ever  
 moved  
 Among us in white armor, Galahad.  
 'God make thee good as thou art beau-  
 tiful,'  
 Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight ;  
 and none,  
 In so young youth, was ever made a knight  
 Till Galahad ; and this Galahad, when  
 he heard  
 My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze ;  
 His eyes became so like her own, they  
 seem'd  
 Hers, and himself her brother more than I.



"Sister or brother none had he ; but  
 some  
 Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some  
 said  
 Begotten by enchantment — chattering  
 they,  
 Like birds of passage piping up and down,  
 That gape for flies — we know not whence  
 they come ;  
 For when was Lancelot wand'ringly lewd ?

"But she, the wan sweet maiden shore  
 away  
 Clean from her forehead all that wealth  
 of hair  
 Which made a silken mat-work for her  
 feet ;  
 And out of this she plaited broad and long  
 A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver  
 thread  
 And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
 A crimson grail within a silver beam ;  
 And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound  
 it on him,  
 Saying, 'My knight, my love, my knight  
 of heaven,  
 O thou, my love, whose love is one with  
 mine,  
 I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my  
 belt.  
 Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have  
 seen,  
 And break thro' all, till one will crown  
 thee king  
 Far in the spiritual city': and as she spake  
 She sent the deathless passion in her eyes  
 Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid  
 her mind  
 On him, and he believed in her belief.

"Then came a year of miracle: O  
 brother,  
 In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,  
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
 And carven with strange figures ; and in  
 and out  
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
 Of letters in a tongue no man could read.  
 And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege perilous,'  
 Perilous for good and ill ; 'for there,'  
 he said,  
 'No man could sit but he should lose  
 himself':  
 And once by misadventure Merlin sat  
 In his own chair, and so was lost ; but he,  
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,  
 Cried, 'If I lose myself I save myself !'

"Then on a summer night it came to  
 pass,  
 While the great banquet lay along the  
 hall,  
 That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's  
 chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat, we  
 heard  
 A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
 And rending, and a blast, and overhead  
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
 And in the blast there smote along the hall  
 A beam of light seven times more clear  
 than day :  
 And down the long beam stole the Holy  
 Grail  
 All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
 And none might see who bare it, and it  
 pass'd.  
 But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
 As in a glory, and all the knights arose,  
 And staring each at other like dumb men  
 Stood, till I found a voice and sware a  
 vow.

"I sware a vow before them all, that I,  
 Because I had not seen the Grail, would  
 ride  
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
 Until I found and saw it, as the nun  
 My sister saw it ; and Galahad sware the  
 vow,  
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin,  
 sware,  
 And Lancelot sware, and many among  
 the knights,  
 And Gawain sware, and louder than the  
 rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, ask-  
 ing him,  
 "What said the King ? Did Arthur take  
 the vow ?"

"Nay, for my lord," said Percivale,  
 "the king,  
 Was not in hall : for early that same day,  
 Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,  
 An outraged maiden sprang into the hall  
 Crying on help : for all her shining hair  
 Was smear'd with earth, and either milky  
 arm  
 Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all  
 she wore  
 Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
 In tempest : so the king arose and went

To smoke the scandalous hive of those  
 wild bees  
 That made such honey in his realm.  
 Howbeit  
 Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
 Returning o'er the plain that then began  
 To darken under Camelot; whence the  
 king  
 Look'd up, calling aloud, 'Lo there! the  
 roofs  
 Of our great hall are rolled in thunder-  
 smoke!  
 Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by  
 the bolt.'  
 For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
 Ashaving thereso oft with all his knights  
 Feasted, and as the stateliest under  
 heaven.

"O brother, had you known our mighty  
 hall,  
 Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!  
 For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
 And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
 Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,  
 By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing  
 brook,  
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin  
 built.  
 And four great zones of sculpture, set  
 betwixt  
 With many a mystic symbol, gird the  
 hall:  
 And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,  
 And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
 And on the third are warriors, perfect men,  
 And on the fourth are men with growing  
 wings,  
 And over all one statue in the mould  
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
 And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern  
 Star.  
 And eastward fronts the statue, and the  
 crown  
 And both the wings are made of gold,  
 and flame  
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
 Behold it, crying, 'We have still a king.'

"And, brother, had you known our  
 hall within,  
 Broader and higher than any in all the  
 lands!  
 Where twelve great windows blazon  
 Arthur's wars,  
 And all the light that falls upon the board

Streams thro' the twelve great battles of  
 our King.  
 Nay, one there is, and at the eastern  
 end,  
 Wealthy with wandering lines of mount  
 and mere,  
 Where Arthur finds the brand, Excalibur.  
 And also one to the west, and counter  
 to it,  
 And blank: and who shall blazon it?  
 when and how?—  
 O there, perchance, when all our wars  
 are done,  
 The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

"So to this hall full quickly rode the  
 King,  
 In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish,  
 wrapt  
 In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.  
 And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw  
 The golden dragon sparkling over all:  
 And many of those who burnt the hold,  
 their arms  
 Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with  
 smoke, and sear'd,  
 Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,  
 Full of the vision, prest: and then the  
 King  
 Spake to me, being nearest, 'Percivale,'  
 (Because the hall was all in tumult—some  
 Vowing, and some protesting), 'what is  
 this?'

"O brother, when I told him what  
 had chanced,  
 My sister's vision, and the rest, his face  
 Darken'd, as I have seen it more than  
 once,  
 When some brave deed seem'd to be done  
 in vain,  
 Darken; and 'Woe is me, my knights,'  
 he cried,  
 'Had I been here, ye had not sworn the  
 vow.'  
 Bold was mine answer, 'Had thyself  
 been here,  
 My King, thou wouldst have sworn.'  
 'Yea, yea,' said he,  
 'Art thou so bold and hast not seen the  
 Grail?'

"Nay, Lord, I heard the sound, I  
 saw the light,  
 But since I did not see the Holy Thing,  
 I swear a vow to follow it till I saw.'

“Then when he asked us, knight by knight, if any  
Had seen it, all their answers were as one :  
‘Nay, Lord, and therefore have we sworn  
our vows.’

“‘Lo now,’ said Arthur, ‘have ye  
seen a cloud ?  
What go ye into the wilderness to see ?’

“Then Galahad on the sudden, and  
in a voice  
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call’d,  
‘But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,  
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—  
O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.’

“‘Ah, Galahad, Galahad,’ said the  
King, ‘for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these.  
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—  
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—  
A sign to main this Order which I made.  
But you, that follow but the leader’s bell’  
(Brother, the King was hard upon his  
knights)

‘Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,  
And one hath sung and all the dumb will  
sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne  
Five knights at once, and every younger  
knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,  
What are ye ? Galahads ?—no, nor Per-  
civales’

(For thus it pleased the King to range  
me close

After Sir Galahad) ; ‘nay,’ said he, ‘but  
men

With strength and will to right the  
wrong’d, of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,  
Knights that in twelve great battles  
splash’d and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own  
heathen blood—

But one hath seen, and all the blind will  
see.

Go, since your vows are sacred, being  
made :

Yet—for ye know the cries of all my  
realm

Pass thro’ this hall—how often, O my  
knights,

Your places being vacant at my side,  
This chance of noble deeds will come and go

Unchallenged, while you follow wander-  
ing fires

Lost in the quagmire ? Many of you,  
yea most,

Return no more : ye think I show myself  
Too dark a prophet : come now, let us  
meet

The morrow morn once more in one full  
field

Of gracious pastime, that once more the  
King,

Before you leave him for this Quest, may  
count

The yet-unbroken strength of all his  
knights,

Rejoicing in that Order which he made.’

“So when the sun broke next from  
under ground,

All the great table of our Arthur closed  
And clash’d in such a tourney and so full,  
So many lances broken—never yet  
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur  
came.

And I myself and Galahad, for a strength  
Was in us from the vision, overthrew  
So many knights that all the people cried,  
And almost burst the barriers in their  
heat,

Shouting ‘Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale !’

“But when the next day brake from  
under ground—

O brother, had you known our Camelot,  
Built by old kings, age after age, so old  
The King himself had fears that it would  
fall,

So strange, and rich, and dim ; for where  
the roofs

Totter’d toward each other in the sky,  
Metforeheads all along the street of those  
Who watch’d us pass ; and lower, and  
where the long

Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh’d the  
necks

Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
Thicker than drops from thunder, show-  
ers of flowers

Fell as wepest ; and men and boys astride  
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,  
At all the corners, named useach by name,  
Calling ‘God speed !’ but in the street  
below

The knights and ladies wept, and rich and  
poor

Wept, and the King himself could hardly  
speak

For grief, and in the middle street the  
 Queen,  
 Whorode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd  
 aloud,  
 'This madness has come on us for our  
 sins.'  
 And then we reach'd the weirdly-sculp-  
 tured gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mys-  
 tically,  
 And thence departed every one his way.

"And I was lifted up in heart, and  
 thought  
 Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,  
 How my strong lance had beaten down  
 the knights,  
 So many and famous names; and never yet  
 Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth  
 so green,  
 For all my blood danced in me, and I knew  
 That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

"Thereafter, the dark warning of our  
 King,  
 That most of us would follow wandering  
 fires,  
 Came like a driving gloom across my  
 mind.  
 Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
 And every evil thought I had thought  
 of old,  
 And every evil deed I ever did,  
 Awoke and cried, 'This Quest is not for  
 thee.'  
 And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself  
 Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,  
 And I was thirsty even unto death;  
 And I, too, cried, 'This Quest is not for  
 thee.'

"And on I rode, and when I thought  
 my thirst  
 Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then  
 a brook,  
 With one sharp rapid, where the crisp-  
 ing white  
 Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,  
 And took both ear and eye; and o'er the  
 brook  
 Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook  
 Fallen, and on the lawns. 'I will rest  
 here,'  
 I said, 'I am not worthy of the Quest';  
 But even while I drank the brook, and  
 ate  
 The goodly apples, all these things at once

Fell into dust, and I was left alone,  
 And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

"And then behold a woman at a door  
 Spinning; and fair the house whereby  
 she sat,  
 And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,  
 And all her bearing gracious; and she  
 rose  
 Opening her arms to meet me, as who  
 should say,  
 'Rest here'; but when I touched her,  
 lo! she, too,  
 Fell into dust and nothing, and the  
 house  
 Became no better than a broken shed,  
 And in it a dead babe; and also this  
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

"And on I rode, and greater was my  
 thirst.  
 Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the  
 world,  
 And where it smote the ploughshare in the  
 field,  
 The ploughman left his ploughing, and  
 fell down  
 Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,  
 The milkmaid left her milking, and fell  
 down  
 Before it, and I knew not why, but thought  
 'The sun is rising,' tho' the sun had risen.  
 Then was I ware of one that on me moved  
 In golden armor with a crown of gold  
 About a casque all jewels; and his horse  
 In golden armor jewell'd everywhere:  
 And on the splendor came, flashing me  
 blind;  
 And seem'd to me the Lord of all the  
 world,  
 Being so huge. But when I thought he  
 meant  
 To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,  
 Opened his arms to embrace me as he  
 came,  
 And up I went and touch'd him, and he,  
 too,  
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
 And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

"And I rode on and found a mighty  
 hill,  
 And on the top, a city wall'd: the spires  
 Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into  
 heaven.  
 And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and  
 these



Cried to me climbing, 'Welcome, Percivale!

Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!'

And glad was I and clomb, but found at top

No man, nor any voice. And thence I past  
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw  
That man had once dwelt there; but  
there I found

Only one man of an exceeding age.  
'Where is that goodly company,' said I,  
'That so cried out upon me?' and he  
had

Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd  
'Whence and what art thou?' and even  
as he spoke

Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I  
Was left alone once more, and cried in  
grief,

'Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself  
And touch it, it will crumble into dust.'

"And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,  
Low as the hill was high, and where the  
vale

Was lowest, found a chapel and thereby  
A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
To whom I told my phantoms, and he said:

"O son, thou hast not true humility,  
The highest virtue, mother of them all;  
For when the Lord of all things made  
Himself

Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
"Take thou my robe," she said, "for all  
is thine,"

And all her form shone forth with sudden  
light

So that the angels were amazed, and she  
Follow'd him down, and like a flying star  
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east;  
But her thou hast not known: for what  
is this

Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy  
sins?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself  
As Galahad.' When the hermit made  
an end,

In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone  
Before us, and against the chapel door  
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt in  
prayer.

And there the hermit slaked my burning  
thirst

And at the sacring of the mass I saw  
The holy elements alone; but he:

'Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the  
Grail,

The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine:  
I saw the fiery face as of a child

That smote itself into the bread, and went;  
And hither am I come; and never yet  
Hath want thy sister taught me first to see,  
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side,  
nor come

Cover'd, but moving with me night and  
day,

Fainter by day, but always in the night  
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd  
marsh

Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top  
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below  
Blood-red. And in the strength of this  
I rode,

Shattering all evil customs everywhere,  
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made  
them mine,

And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore  
them down,

And broke thro' all, and in the strength  
of this

Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,  
And hence I go; and one will crown me  
king

Far in the spiritual city; and come thou,  
too,

For thou shalt see the vision when I go.'

"While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling  
on mine,

Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew  
One with him, to believe as he believed.  
Then, when the day began to wane, we  
went.

"There rose a hill that none but man  
could climb,

Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-  
courses—

Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it,  
storm

Round us and death; for every moment  
glanced

His silver arms and gloom'd: so quick  
and thick

The lightnings here and there to left  
and right

Struck, till the dry old trunks about us,  
dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,  
Sprang into fire: and at the base we found  
On either hand, as far as eye could see,  
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,

Part black, part whiten'd with the bones  
of men,

Not to be crost, save that some ancient king  
Had built a way, where, link'd with  
many a bridge,

A thousand piers ran into the great sea.  
And Galahad fled along them bridge by  
bridge,

And every bridge as quickly as he crost  
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I  
yearn'd

To follow ; and thrice above him all the  
heavens

Open'd and blazed with thunder such as  
seem'd

Shoutings of all the sons of God : and first  
At once I saw him far on the great sea,  
In silver-shining armor starry-clear ;  
And o'er his head the holy vessel hung  
Clothed in white samite or a luminous  
cloud.

And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat  
If boat it were — I saw not whence it came.  
And when the heavens open'd and blazed  
again

Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —  
And had he set the sail, or had the boat  
Become a living creature clad with wings ?  
And o'er his head the holy vessel hung  
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,  
For now I knew the veil had been with-  
drawn.

Then in a moment when they blazed again  
Opening, I saw the least of little stars  
Down on the waste, and straight beyond  
the star

I saw the spiritual city and all her spires  
And gateways in a glory like one pearl —  
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints —  
Strike from the sea ; and from the star  
there shot

A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there  
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,  
Which never eyes on earth again shall  
see.

Then fell the floods of heaven drowning  
the deep.

And how my feet recross'd the deathful  
ridge

No memory in me lives ; but that I touch'd  
The chapel-doors at dawn I know ; and  
thence

Taking my war-horse from the holy man,  
Glad that no phantom vexed me more,  
return'd

To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's  
wars."

"O brother," ask'd Ambrosius, — "for  
in sooth

These ancient books — and they would  
win thee — teem,

Only I find not there this Holy Grail,  
With miracles and marvels like to these,  
Not all unlike ; which oftentime I read,  
Who read but on my breviary with ease,  
Till my head swims ; and then go forth  
and pass

Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,  
And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest  
To these old walls — and mingle with  
our folk ;

And knowing every honest face of theirs,  
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,  
And every homely secret in their hearts,  
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,  
And ills and aches, and teethings, lyings-  
in,

And mirthful sayings, children of the  
place,

That have no meaning half a league away :  
Or lulling random squabbles when they  
rise,

Chafferings and chatterings at the mar-  
ket-cross,

Rejoice, small man, in this small world  
of mine,

Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs —  
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad  
Came ye on none but phantoms in your  
quest,

No man, no woman ?"

Then, Sir Percivale :

"All men, to one so bound by such a vow,  
And women were as phantoms. O, my  
brother,

Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee  
How far I falter'd from my quest and vow ?  
For after I had lain so many nights  
A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake,  
In grass and burdock, I was changed to  
wan

And meagre, and the vision had not come,  
And then I chanced upon a goodly town  
With one great dwelling in the middle of  
it ;

Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd  
By maidens each as fair as any flower :  
But when they led me into hall, behold  
The Princess of that castle was the one,  
Brother, and that one only, who had ever  
Made my heart leap ; for when I moved  
of old

A slender page about her father's hall,

And she a slender maiden, all my heart  
Went after her with longing : yet we twain  
Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.  
And now I came upon her once again,  
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,  
And all his land and wealth and state  
were hers.

And while I tarried, every day she set  
A banquet richer than the day before  
By me ; for all her longing and her will  
Was toward me as of old ; till one fair  
morn,

I walking to and fro beside a stream  
That flash'd across her orchard under-  
neath

Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,  
And calling me the greatest of all knights,  
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first  
time,

And gave herself and all her wealth to me.  
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning  
word,

That most of us would follow wandering  
fires,

And the Quest faded in my heart. Anon,  
The heads of all her people drew to me,  
With supplication both of knees and  
tongue :

'We have heard of thee : thou art our  
greatest knight,

Our Lady says it, and we well believe :  
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land.'  
O me, my brother ! but one night my vow  
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,  
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine  
own self,

And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her ;  
Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
Cared not for her, nor anything upon  
earth."

Then said the monk, " Poor men, when  
yule is cold,

Must be content to sit by little fires.  
And this am I, so that ye care for me  
Ever so little ; yea, and blest be Heaven  
That brought thee here to this poor house  
of ours,

Where all the brethren are so hard, to  
warm

My cold heart with a friend : but O the  
pity

To find thine own first love once more —  
to hold,

Hold her a wealthy bride within thine  
arms,

Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,  
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.  
For we that want the warmth of double  
life,

We that are plagued with dreams of  
something sweet

Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich, —  
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthlywise,  
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,  
But live like an old badger in his earth,  
With earth about him everywhere, despite  
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,  
None of your knights ?"

"Yea so," said Percivale :

"One night my pathway swerving east,  
I saw

The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors  
All in the middle of the rising moon :  
And toward him spurr'd and hail'd him,  
and he me,

And each made joy of either ; then he  
ask'd,

'Where is he ? hast thou seen him —  
Lancelot ?' 'Once,'

Said good Sir Bors, 'he dash'd across  
me — mad,

And maddening what he rode : and when  
I cried,

"Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest  
So holy ?" Lancelot shouted, "Stay me  
not !

I have been the sluggard, and I ride  
apace,

For now there is a lion in the way."  
So vanish'd.'

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,  
Because his former madness, once the talk  
And scandal of our table, had return'd ;  
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship  
him

That ill to him is ill to them ; to Bors  
Beyond the rest : he well had been content  
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have  
seen,

The Holy Cup of healing ; and, indeed,  
Being so clouded with his grief and love,  
Small heart was his after the Holy Quest :  
If God would send the vision, well : if not,  
The Quest and he were in the hands of  
heaven.

"And then, with small adventure met,  
Sir Bors  
Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,

And found a people there among their  
craggs,  
Our race and blood, a remnant that were  
left  
Paynim amid their circles, and the stones  
They pitch up straight to heaven : and  
their wise men  
Were strong in that old magic which can  
trace  
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd  
at him  
And this high Quest as at a simple thing :  
Told him he follow'd — almost Arthur's  
words —  
A mocking fire : ' what other fire than he,  
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom  
blows,  
And the sea rolls, and all the world is  
warm'd ?'  
And when his answer chafed them, the  
rough crowd,  
Hearing he had a difference with their  
priests,  
Seized him, and bound and plunged him  
into a cell  
Of great piled stones ; and lying bounden  
there  
In darkness thro' innumerable hours  
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens  
sween  
Over him, till by miracle — what else ? —  
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,  
Such as no wind could move : and thro'  
the gap  
Glimmer'd the streaming scud : then  
came a night  
Still as the day was loud ; and thro' the gap  
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table  
Round —  
For, brother, so one night, because they  
roll  
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named  
the stars,  
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our king —  
And these, like bright eyes of familiar  
friends,  
In on him shone, ' And then to me, to  
me,'  
Said good Sir Bors, ' beyond all hopes  
of mine,  
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for  
myself —  
Across the seven clear stars — O grace to  
me —  
In color like the fingers of a hand  
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail  
Glide'd and past, and close upon it peal'd

A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards a  
maid,  
Who kept our holy faith among her kin  
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go."

To whom the monk : " And I remem-  
ber now  
That pelican on the casque . Sir Bors it was  
Who spake so low and sadly at our board ;  
And mighty reverent at our grace was he :  
A square-set man and honest ; and his  
eyes,  
An out-doorsign of all the warmth within.  
Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath  
a cloud,  
But heaven had meant it for a sunny one :  
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else ? But when  
ye reach'd  
The city, found ye all your knights re-  
turn'd,  
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,  
Tell me, and what said each, and what  
the King ?"

Then answer'd Percivale : " And that  
can I,  
Brother, and truly ; since the living words  
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King  
Pass not from door to door and out again,  
But sit within the house. O, when we  
reach'd  
The city, our horses stumbling as they  
trode  
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cock-  
atrices,  
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the  
stones  
Raw, that they fell from, brought us to  
the hall.

" And there sat Arthur on the daïs-  
throne,  
And those that had gone out upon the  
Quest,  
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,  
And those that had not, stood before the  
King.  
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade  
me hail,  
Saying, ' A welfare in thine eye reproves  
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee  
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding ford.  
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late  
Among the strange devices of our kings ;  
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of  
ours,



And from the statue Merlin moulded for  
us  
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now —  
the quest,  
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy  
Cup,  
That Joseph brought of old to Glaston-  
bury?'

"So when I told him all thyself hast  
heard,  
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve  
To pass away into the quiet life,  
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,  
ask'd  
Of Gawain, 'Gawain, was this Quest for  
thee?'

"'Nay, lord,' said Gawain, 'not for  
such as I.  
Therefore I communed with a saintly man,  
Who made me sure the Quest was not for  
me;  
For I was much awearied of the Quest:  
But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
And merry maidens in it; and then this  
gale  
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,  
And blew my merry maidens all about  
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant  
to me.'

"He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to  
whom at first  
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,  
push'd  
Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught  
his hand,  
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,  
stood,  
Until the King espied him, saying to him,  
'Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true  
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail';  
and Bors,  
'Ask me not, for I may not speak of it,  
I saw it': and the tears were in his eyes.

"Then there remain'd but Lancelot,  
for the rest  
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm;  
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,  
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;  
'Thou, too, my Lancelot,' ask'd the King,  
'my friend,  
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd  
for thee?'

"'Our mightiest!' answer'd Lancelot,  
with a groan;  
'O King!' — and when he paused, me-  
thought I spied

A dying gleam of madness in his eyes —  
'O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,  
Happier are those that welter in their sin,  
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for  
slime,

Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a sin  
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,  
Noble, and knightly in me twined and  
clung

Round that one sin, until the wholesome  
flower

And poisonous grew together, each a seach,  
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when  
thy knights

Sware, I swear with them only in the hope  
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail  
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then  
I spake

To one most holy saint, who wept and said,  
That save they could be pluck'd asunder,  
all

My quest were but in vain; to whom I  
vow'd

That I would work according as he will'd.  
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd  
and strove

To tear the twain asunder in my heart,  
My madness came upon me as of old,  
And whipt me into waste fields far away;  
There was I beaten down by little men,  
Mean knights, to whom the moving of  
my sword

And shadow of my spear had been enow  
To scare them from me once; and then  
I came

All in my folly to the naked shore,  
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse  
grasses grew;

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,  
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,  
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,  
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea  
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens  
Were shaken with the motion and the  
sound.

And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a  
boat,

Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a  
chain;

And in my madness to myself I said,  
'I will embark and I will lose myself,  
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'

I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.  
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,  
And with me drove the moon and all the  
stars ;

And the wind fell, and on the seventh  
night

I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,  
And felt the boat shock earth, and look-  
ing up,

Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,  
A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,  
And steps that met the breaker! there  
was none

Stood near it but a lion on each side  
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.  
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the  
stairs.

There drew my sword. With sudden-  
flaring manes

Those two great beasts rose upright like  
a man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood be-  
tween ;

And, when I would have smitten them,  
heard a voice,

“Doubt not, go forward ; if thou doubt,  
the beasts

Will tear thee piecemeal.” Then with  
violence

The sword was dash'd from out my hand,  
and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past ;  
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw  
No bench nor table, painting on the wall  
Or shield of knight ; only the rounded  
moon

Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.  
But always in the quiet house I heard,  
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower  
To the eastward : up I climb'd a thou-  
sand steps

With pain : as in a dream I seem'd to  
climb

For ever : at the last I reach'd a door,  
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,  
“Glory and joy and honor to our Lord  
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.”  
Then in my madness I essay'd the door ;  
It gave ; and thro' a stormy glare, a heat  
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,  
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd  
away —

O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,  
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around

Great angels, awful shapes, and wings  
and eyes.

And but for all my madness and my sin,  
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw  
That which I saw ; but what I saw was  
veil'd

And cover'd ; and this quest was not for  
me.'

“So speaking, and here ceasing,  
Lancelot left

The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain —  
nay,

Brother, I need not tell thee foolish  
words, —

A reckless and irreverent knight was he,  
Now bolden'd by the silence of his King, —

Well, I will tell thee : ‘O king, my  
liege,’ he said,

‘Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine ?  
When have I stinted stroke in foughten  
field ?

But as for thine, my good friend, Percivale,  
Thy holy nun and thou have driven  
men mad,

Yea, made our mightiest madder than  
our least.

But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,  
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,  
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,  
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
Henceforward.'

“‘Deafer,’ said the blameless King,  
‘Gawain, and blinder unto holy things  
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,  
Being too blind to have desire to see.  
But if indeed there came a sign from  
heaven,

Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,  
For these have seen according to their  
sight.

For every fiery prophet in old times,  
And all the sacred madness of the bard,  
When God made music thro' them, could  
but speak

His music by the framework and the  
chord ;

And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

“‘Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot :  
never yet

Could all of true and noble in knight  
and man

Twine round oneself, whatever it might be,  
With such a closeness, but apart there  
grew,

Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,  
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness ;  
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

“ ‘And spake I not too truly, O my knights ?  
Was I too dark a prophet when I said  
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,  
That most of them would follow wandering fires,  
Lost in the quagmire ? — lost to me and gone,  
And left me gazing at a barren board,  
And a lean Order — scarce return’d a tithe —  
And out of those to whom the vision came  
My greatest hardly will believe he saw ;  
Another hath beheld it afar off,  
And leaving human wrongs to right themselves,  
Cares but to pass into the silent life.  
And one hath had the vision face to face,  
And now his chair desires him here in vain,  
However they may crown him elsewhere.

“ ‘And some among you held, that if the King  
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow :  
Not easily, seeing that the King must guard  
That which he rules, and is but as the hind  
To whom a space of land is given to plough,  
Who may not wander from the allotted field,  
Before his work be done ; but, being done,  
Let visions of the night or of the day  
Come, as they will ; and many a time they come,  
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,  
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,  
This air that smites his forehead is not air  
But vision — yea, his very hand and foot —  
In moments when he feels he cannot die,  
And knows himself no vision to himself,  
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One  
Who rose again : ye have seen what ye have seen.’

“So spake the king : I knew not all he meant.”

PELLEAS AND ETARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill the gap  
Left by the Holy Quest ; and as he sat  
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors  
Were softly sunder’d, and thro’ these a youth,  
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields  
Past, and the sunshine came along with him.

“Make me thy knight, because I know, Sir King,  
All that belongs to knighthood, and I love,”  
Such was his cry ; for having heard the King  
Had let proclaim a tournament — the prize  
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won  
The golden circlet, for himself the sword :  
And there were those who knew him near the King  
And promised for him : and Arthur made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the isles —  
But lately come to his inheritance,  
And lord of many a barren isle was he —  
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,  
Across the forest call’d of Dean, to find  
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun  
Beat like a strong knight on his helm,  
and reel’d  
Almost to falling from his horse ; but saw  
Near him a mound of even-sloping side,  
Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,  
And here and there great hollies under them.  
But for a mile all round was open space,  
And fern and heath : and slowly Pelleas drew  
To that mid day, then binding his good horse  
To a tree, cast himself down ; and as he lay  
At random looking over the brown earth  
Thro’ that green-glooming twilight of the grove,  
It seem’d to Pelleas that the fern without  
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,  
So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it.  
Then o’er it crost the dimness of a cloud  
Floating, and once the shadow of a bird

Flying, and then a fawn ; and his eyes  
closed.

And since he loved all maidens, but no  
maid

In special, half-awake he whisper'd,  
"Where ?

O where ? I love thee, tho' I know thee  
not.

For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,  
And I will make thee with my spear and  
sword

As famous — O my queen, my Guinevere,  
For I will bethine Arthur when we meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk  
And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he  
saw,

Strange as to some old prophet might  
have seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,  
Damsels in divers colors like the cloud  
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
On horses, and the horses richly trapt  
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken  
stood :

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
And one was pointing this way, and one  
that,

Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,  
And loosed his horse, and led him to the  
light.

There she that seem'd the chief among  
them said,

"In happy time behold our pilot-star !  
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we  
ride,

Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights  
There at Caerleon, but have lost our way :  
To right ? to left ? straightforward ? back  
again ?

Which ? tell us quickly."

And Pelleas gazing thought,  
"Is Guinevere herself so beautiful ?"  
For large her violet eyes look'd, and her  
bloom

A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heavens,  
And round her limbs, mature in woman-  
hood,

And slender was her hand and small her  
shape,

And but for those large eyes, the haunts  
of scorn,

She might have seem'd a toy to trifle with,

And pass and care no more. But while  
he gazed

The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,  
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul :  
For as the base man, judging of the good,  
Puts his own baseness in him by default  
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend  
All the young beauty of his own soul to  
hers,

Believing her ; and when she spake to him,  
Stammer'd, and could not make her a  
reply.

For out of the waste islands had he come,  
Where saving his own sisters he had known  
Scarce any but the women of his isles,  
Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd  
against the gulls,  
Makers of nets, and living from the sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady  
round

And look'd upon her people ; and as when  
A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn,  
The circle widens till it lip the marge,  
Spread the slow smile thro' all her com-  
pany.

Three knights were thereamong ; and  
they too smiled,  
Scorning him ; for the lady was Ettarre,  
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, "O wild and of the  
woods,  
Knowest thou not the fashion of our  
speech ?  
Or have the Heavens but given thee a  
fair face,  
Lacking a tongue ?"

"O damsel," answer'd he,  
"I woke from dreams ; and coming out  
of gloom  
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and  
crave

Pardon : but will ye to Caerleon ? I  
Go likewise : shall I lead you to the King ?"

"Lead then," she said ; and thro' the  
woods they went.

And while they rode, the meaning in his  
eyes,

His tenderness of manner, and chaste  
awe,

His broken utterances and bashfulness,  
Were all a burthen to her, and in her  
heart

She mutter'd, "I have lighted on a fool,



Raw, yet so stale ! " But since her mind  
 was bent  
 On hearing, after trumpet blown, her  
 name  
 And title, " Queen of Beauty," in the lists  
 Cried — and beholding him so strong,  
 she thought  
 That peradventure he will fight for me,  
 And win the circlet : therefore flatter'd  
 him,  
 Being so gracious, that he well nigh deem'd  
 His wish by hers was echo'd ; and her  
 knights  
 And all her damsels too were gracious to  
 him,  
 For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd  
 Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,  
 Taking his hand, " O the strong hand,"  
 she said,  
 " See ! look at mine ! but wilt thou fight  
 for me,  
 And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,  
 That I may love thee ? "

Then his helpless heart  
 Leapt, and he cried " Ay ! wilt thou if  
 I win ? "  
 " Ay, that will I," she answer'd, and she  
 laugh'd,  
 And straitly nipt the hand, and flung it  
 from her ;  
 Then glanced askew at those three knights  
 of hers,  
 Till all her ladies laugh'd along with her.

" O happy world," thought Pelleas,  
 " all, meseems,  
 Are happy ; I the happiest of them all."   
 Nor slept that night for pleasure in his  
 blood,  
 And green wood-ways, and eyes among  
 the leaves ;  
 Then being on the morrow knighted, sware  
 To love one only. And as he came away,  
 The men who met him rounded on their  
 heels  
 And wonder'd after him, because his face  
 Shone like the countenance of a priest of  
 old  
 Against the flame about a sacrifice  
 Kindled by fire from heaven : so glad was  
 he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and  
 strange knights

From the four winds came in : and each  
 one sat,  
 Tho' served with choice from air, land,  
 stream, and sea,  
 Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his  
 eyes  
 His neighbor's make and might : and  
 Pelleas look'd  
 Noble among the noble, for he dream'd  
 His lady loved him, and he knew himself  
 Loved of the King : and him his new-  
 made knight  
 Worship, whose lightest whisper moved  
 him more  
 Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush'd and brake the morning  
 of the jousts,  
 And this was call'd " The Tournament  
 of Youth " :  
 For Arthur, loving his young knight,  
 withheld  
 His older and his mightier from the lists,  
 That Pelleas might obtain his lady's  
 love,  
 According to her promise, and remain  
 Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had  
 the jousts  
 Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk  
 Holden : the gilded parapets were crown'd  
 With faces, and the great tower fill'd  
 with eyes  
 Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew.  
 There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the field  
 With honor : so by that strong hand of his  
 The sword and golden circlet were  
 achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved :  
 the heat  
 Of pride and g'ory fired her face ; her eye  
 Sparkled ; she caught the circlet from  
 his lance,  
 And there before the people crown'd her-  
 self.  
 So for the last time she was gracious to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her look  
 Bright for all others, cloudier on her  
 knight —  
 Linger'd Ettarre : and seeing Pelleas  
 droop,  
 Said Guinevere, " We marvel at thee  
 much,  
 O damsel, wearing this unsunny face  
 To him who won thee glory ! " And she  
 said,

“Had ye not held your Lancelot in your  
bower,  
My Queen, he had not won.” Whereat  
the Queen,  
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,  
Glanced down upon her, turn’d and went  
her way.

But after, when her damsels, and her-  
self,  
And those three knights all set their  
faces home,  
Sir Pelleas follow’d. She that saw him  
cried,  
“Damsels — and yet I should be shamed  
to say it —

I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back  
Among yourselves. Would rather that  
we had

Some rough old knight who knew the  
worldly way,

Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride  
And jest with : take him to you, keep  
him off,

And pamper him with papmeat, if ye will,  
Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,  
Such as the wholesome mothers tell their  
boys.

Nay, should ye try him with a merry one  
To find his mettle, good : and if he fly  
us,

Small matter ! let him.” This her dam-  
sels heard,

And mindful of her small and cruel hand,  
They, closing round him thro’ the jour-  
ney home,

Acted her hest, and always from her side  
Restrained him with all manner of device,  
So that he could not come to speech with  
her.

And when she gain’d her castle, upsprang  
the bridge,

Down rang the grate of iron thro’ the  
groove,

And he was left alone in open field.

“These be the ways of ladies,” Pelleas  
thought,

“To those who love them, trials of our  
faith.

Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,  
For loyal to the uttermost am I.”

So made his moan ; and, darkness falling,  
sought

A priory not far off, there lodged, but rose  
With morning every day, and, moist or  
dry,

Full-arm’d upon his charger all day long  
Sat by the walls, and no one open’d to  
him.

And this persistence turn’d her scorn  
to wrath.

Then calling her three knights, she  
charged them, “Out !

And drive him from the walls.” And  
out they came,

But Pelleas overthrew them as they dash’d  
Against him one by one ; and these re-  
turn’d,

But still he kept his watch beneath the  
wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate ;  
and once,

A week beyond, while walking on the  
walls

With her three knights, she pointed  
downward, “Look,

He haunts me—I cannot breathe—  
besieges me ;

Down ! strike him ! put my hate into  
your strokes,

And drive him from my walls.” And  
down they went,

And Pelleas overthrew them one by one ;  
And from the tower above him cried

Ettarre,  
“Bind him, and bring him in.”

He heard her voice ;  
Then let the strong hand, which had  
overthrown

Her minion-knights, by those he over-  
threw

Be bounden straight, and so they brought  
him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,  
the sight

Of her rich beauty made him at one glance  
More bondsman in his heart than in his  
bonds.

Yet with good cheer he spake, “Behold  
me, Lady,

A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will ;  
And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,

Content am I so that I see thy face  
But once a day : for I have sworn my vows,

And thou hast given thy promise, and I  
know

That all these pains are trials of my faith,  
And that thyself when thou hast seen me  
strain’d

And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
Yield me thy love and know me for thy  
knight."

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
With all her damsels, he was stricken  
mute ;  
But when she mock'd his vows and the  
great King,  
Lighted on words : "For pity of thine  
own self,  
Peace, Lady, peace : is he not thine and  
mine ?"  
"Thou fool," she said, "I never heard  
his voice  
But long'd to break away. Unbind him  
now,  
And thrust him out of doors ; for save  
he be  
Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,  
He will return no more." And those,  
her three,  
Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him  
from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again  
She call'd them, saying, "There he  
watches yet,  
There like a dog before his master's door !  
Kick'd, he returns : do ye not hate him,  
ye ?  
Ye know yourselves : how can ye bide  
at peace,  
Affronted with his fulsome innocence ?  
Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,  
No men to strike ? Fall on him all at once,  
And if ye slay him I reckon not : if ye fail,  
Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,  
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in :  
It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds."

She spake ; and at her will they  
couch'd their spears,  
Three against one : and Gawain passing by,  
Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
Low down beneath the shadow of those  
towers  
A villany, three to one : and thro' his heart  
The fire of honor and all noble deeds  
Flash'd, and he call'd, "I strike upon  
thy side —  
The catiffs !" "Nay," said Pelleas,  
"but forbear ;  
He needs no aid who doth his lady's will."

So Gawain, looking at the villany done,  
Forebore, but in his heat and eagerness

Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, with-  
held  
A moment from the vermin that he sees  
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and  
kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to  
three ;  
And they rose up, and bound, and brought  
him in.  
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,  
burn'd  
Full on her knights in many an evil name  
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten  
hound :  
"Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to  
touch,  
Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust  
him out,  
And let who will release him from his  
bonds.  
And if he comes again" — there she brake  
short ;  
And Pelleas answer'd, "Lady, for indeed  
I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful,  
I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd  
Thro' evil spite : and if ye love me not,  
I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn :  
I had liefer ye were worthy of my love,  
Than to be loved again of you — farewell ;  
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my love,  
Vex not yourself : ye will not see me more."

While thus he spake, she gazed upon  
the man  
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and  
thought,  
"Why have I push'd him from me ? this  
man loves,  
If love there be : yet him I loved not.  
Why ?  
I deem'd him fool ? yea, so ? or that in him  
A something — was it nobler than my-  
self ? —  
Seem'd my reproach ? He is not of my  
kind.  
He could not love me, did he know me well.  
Nay, let him go — and quickly." And  
her knights  
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden  
out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him  
from his bonds,  
And flung them o'er the walls ; and after-  
ward,  
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,

"Faith of my body," he said, "and art thou not —

Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur made

Knight of his table ; yea and he that won  
The circlet ? wherefore hast thou so de-  
famed

Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest,  
As let these caittifs on thee work their  
wil ?"

And Pelleas answer'd, "O, their wills  
are hers

For whom I won the circlet ; and mine,  
hers,

Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,  
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mockery  
now,

Other than when I found her in the woods ;  
And tho' she hath me bounden but in spite,  
And all to flout me, when they bring me in,  
Let me be bounden, I shall see her face ;  
Else must I die thro' mine unhappiness."

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in  
scorn,

"Why, let my lady bind me if she will,  
And let my lady beat me if she will :  
But an she send her delegate to thrall  
These fighting hands of mine — Christ  
kill me then

But I will slice him handless by the wrist,  
And let my lady sear the stump for him,  
Howl as he may. But hold me for your  
friend :

Come, ye know nothing : here I pledge  
my troth,

Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,  
I will be leal to thee and work thy work,  
And tame thy jailing princess to thine  
hand.

Lend me thine horse and arms, and I  
will say

That I have slain thee. She will let me in  
To hear the manner of thy fight and fall ;  
Then, when I come within her counsels,  
then

From prime to vespers will I chant thy  
praise

As prowtest knight and truest lover, more  
Than any have sung thee living, till she  
long

To have thee back in lusty life again,  
Not to be bound, save by white bonds  
and warn,

Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now  
thy horse

And armor : let me go : be comforted :  
Give me three days to melt her fancy,  
and hope  
The third night hence will bring thee news  
of gold."

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his  
arms,

Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and  
took

Gawain's, and said, "Betray me not, but  
help —

Art thou not he whom men call light-of-  
love ?"

"Ay," said Gawain, "for women be  
so light."

Then bounded forward to the castle walls,  
And raised a bugle hanging from his neck,  
And winded it, and that so musically  
That all the old echoes hidden in the wall  
Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-  
tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower ;  
"Avaunt," they cried, "our lady loves  
thee not."

But Gawain lifting up his visor said,  
Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,  
And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye  
hate :

Behold his horse and armor. Open gate,  
And I will make you merry."

And down they ran,  
Her damsels, crying to their lady, "Lo !  
Pelleas is dead — he told us — he that hath  
His horse and armor : will ye let him in ?  
He slew him ! Gawain, Gawain of the  
court,

Sir Gawain — there he waits below the  
wall,

Blowing his bugle as who should say him  
nay."

And so, leave given, straight on thro'  
open door

Rode Gawain, whom she greeted cour-  
teously.

"Dead, is it so ?" she ask'd. "Ay, ay,"  
said he,

"And oft in dying cried upon your name."  
"Pity on him," she answer'd, "a good  
knight,

But never let me bide one hour at peace."  
"Ay," thought Gawain, "and ye be fair  
enow :



But I to your dead man have given my  
troth,  
That whom ye loathe him will I make  
you love."

So those three days, aimless about the  
land,  
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering  
Waited, until the third night brought a  
moon  
With promise of large light on woods and  
ways.

The night was hot : he could not rest,  
but rode  
Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his  
horse  
Hard by the gates. Wide open were the  
gates,  
And no watch kept ; and in thro' these  
he past,  
And heard but his own steps, and his  
own heart  
Beating, for nothing moved but his own  
self,  
And his own shadow. Then he crost  
the court,  
And saw the postern portal also wide  
Yawning ; and up a slope of garden, all  
Of roses white and red, and wild ones  
mixt  
And overgrowing them, went on, and  
found,  
Here too, all hush'd below the mellow  
moon,  
Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave  
Came lightening downward, and so spilt  
itself  
Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware that white pavilions  
rose,  
Three from the bushes, gilden-peakt :  
in one,  
Red after revel, droned her lurdane  
knights  
Slumbering, and their threesquires across  
their feet :  
In one, their malice on the placid lip  
Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her dam-  
sels lay :  
And in the third, the circlet of the jousts  
Bound on her brow, were Gawain and  
Etarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the  
leaf

To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew :  
Back, as a coward slinks from what he  
fears  
To cope with, or a traitor proven, or  
hound  
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame  
Creep with his shadow thro' the court  
again,  
Fingering at his sword-handle until he  
stood  
There on the castle-bridge once more,  
and thought,  
"I will go back, and slay them where  
they lie."

And so went back and seeing them  
yet in sleep  
Said, "Ye, that so dishallow the holy  
sleep,  
Your sleep is death," and drew the sword,  
and thought,  
"What ! slay a sleeping knight ? the  
King hath bound  
And sworn me to this brotherhood ;  
again,  
"Alas that ever a knight should be so  
false."  
Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groan-  
ing laid  
The naked sword athwart their naked  
throats,  
There left it, and them sleeping ; and  
she lay,  
The circlet of the tourney round her brows,  
And the sword of the tourney across her  
throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on  
his horse  
Stared at her towers that, larger than  
themselves  
In their own darkness, throng'd into the  
moon.  
Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs,  
and clench'd  
His hands, and madden'd with himself  
and moan'd :

"Would they have risen against me  
in their blood  
At the last day ? I might have answer'd  
them  
Even before high God. O towers so  
strong,  
Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze  
The crack of earthquake shivering to  
your base

Split you, and Hell burst up your harlot  
 roofs  
 Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and  
 thro' within,  
 Black as the harlot's heart — hollow as  
 a skull !  
 Let the fierce east scream thro' your eye-  
 let-holes,  
 And whirl the dust of harlots round and  
 round  
 In dung and nettles ! hiss, snake — I  
 saw him there —  
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell. Who  
 yells  
 Here in the still sweet summer night,  
 but I —  
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her  
 fool ?  
 Fool, beast — he, she, or I ? myself most  
 fool ;  
 Beast too, as lacking human wit — dis-  
 graced,  
 Dishonor'd all for trial of true love —  
 Love ? — we be all alike : only the king  
 Hath made us fools and liars. O noble  
 vows !  
 O great and sane and simple race of brutes  
 That own no lust because they have no  
 law !  
 For why should I have loved her to my  
 shame ?  
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.  
 I never loved her, I but lusted for her —  
 Away — ”

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,  
 And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'  
 the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on  
 her throat,  
 Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd  
 herself  
 To Gawain : “ Liar, for thou hast not  
 slain  
 This Pelleas ! here he stood and might  
 have slain  
 Me and thyself.” And he that tells the  
 tale  
 Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd  
 To Pelleas, as the one true knight on earth,  
 And only lover ; and thro' her love her life  
 Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half the  
 night,  
 And over hard and soft, striking the sod

From out the soft, the spark from off the  
 hard,  
 Rode till the star above the wakening sun,  
 Beside that tower where Percivale was  
 cowl'd,  
 Glanced from the rosy forehead of the  
 dawn.  
 For so the words were flash'd into his  
 heart  
 He knew not whence or wherefore : “ O  
 sweet star,  
 Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn.”  
 And there he would have wept, but felt  
 his eyes  
 Harder and drier than a fountain bed  
 In summer : thither came the village girls  
 And linger'd talking, and they come no  
 more  
 Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from  
 the heights  
 Again with living waters in the change  
 Of seasons : hard his eyes ; harder his  
 heart  
 Seem'd ; but so weary were his limbs,  
 that he,  
 Gasping, “ Of Arthur's hall am I, but  
 here,  
 Here let me rest and die,” cast himself  
 down,  
 And gulph'd his griefs in inmost sleep ;  
 so lay,  
 Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired  
 The hall of Merlin, and the morning star  
 Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame,  
 and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one  
 nigh,  
 Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,  
 crying  
 “ False ! and I held thee pure as Guin-  
 evere.”

But Percivale stood near him and re-  
 plied,  
 “ Am I but false as Guinevere is pure ?  
 Or art thou mazed with dreams ? or being  
 one  
 Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard  
 That Lancelot ” — there he check'd him-  
 self and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with  
 one  
 Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword  
 That made it plunges thro' the wound  
 again,

And pricks it deeper : and he shrank and  
 wait'd,  
 "Is the Queen false?" and Percivale was  
 mute.  
 "Have any of our Round Table held  
 their vows?"  
 And Percivale made answer not a word.  
 "Is the king true?" "The king!" said  
 Percivale.  
 "Why then let men couple at once with  
 wolves.  
 What! art thou mad?"

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
 Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his  
 horse  
 And fled : small pity upon his horse had  
 he,  
 Or on himself, or any, and when he met  
 A cripple, one that held a hand for  
 alms —  
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old  
 dwarf-elm  
 That turns its back on the salt blast, the  
 boy  
 Paused not but overrode him, shouting  
 "False,  
 And false with Gawain!" and so left him  
 bruised  
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and  
 wood  
 Went ever streaming by him till the  
 gloom,  
 That follows on the turning of the world,  
 Darken'd the common path : he twitch'd  
 the reins,  
 And made his beast that better knew it,  
 swerve  
 Now off it and now on ; but when he saw  
 High up in heaven the hall that Merlin  
 built,  
 Blackening against the dead-green stripes  
 of even,  
 "Black nest of rats," he groan'd, "ye  
 build too high."

Not long thereafter from the city gates  
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
 Warm with a gracious parting from the  
 Queen,  
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star  
 And marvelling what it was : on whom  
 the boy,  
 Across the silent seeded meadow-grass  
 Borne, clash'd : and Lancelot, saying,  
 "What name hast thou  
 That ridest here so blindly and so hard?"

"I have no name," he shouted, "a  
 scourge am I,  
 To lash the treasons of the Table Round."  
 "Yea, but thy name?" "I have many  
 names," he cried :  
 "I am wrath and shame and hate and  
 evil fame,  
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast  
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the  
 Queen."  
 "First over me," said Lancelot, "shalt  
 thou pass."  
 "Fight therefore," yell'd the other, and  
 either knight  
 Drew back a space, and when they closed,  
 at once  
 The weary steed of Pelleas floundering  
 flung  
 His rider, who called out from the dark  
 field,  
 "Thou art false as Hell : slay me : I  
 have no sword."  
 Then Lancelot, "Yea, between thy lips  
 — and sharp ;  
 But here will I disedge it by thy death."  
 "Slay then," he shriek'd, "my will is  
 to be slain."  
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the  
 fall'n,  
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then  
 spake :  
 "Rise, weakling ; I am Lancelot ; say  
 thy say."

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse  
 back  
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while  
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark  
 field,  
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced  
 that both  
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.  
 There with her knights and dames was  
 Guinevere.  
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot  
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him  
 Who had not greeted her, but cast himself  
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing. "Have  
 ye fought?"  
 She ask'd of Lancelot. "Ay, my Queen,"  
 he said.  
 "And thou hast overthrown him?"  
 "Ay, my Queen."  
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, "O young  
 knight,  
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in  
 thee fail'd

So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,  
A fall from him?" Then, for he answer'd  
not,

"Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the  
Queen,

May help them, loose thy tongue, and  
let me know."

But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce  
She quail'd; and he, hissing "I have no  
sword,"

Sprang from the door into the dark. The  
Queen

Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her;  
And each foresaw the dolorous day to  
be:

And all talk died, as in a grove all song  
Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey,  
Then a long silence came upon the hall,  
And Modred thought, "The time is hard  
at hand."

## GUINEVERE.



QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,  
and sat

There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,  
A novice: one low light betwixt them  
burn'd

Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all  
abroad,

Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the  
face,

Clung to the dead earth, and the land  
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of  
flight

Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the  
throne,

Ready to spring, waiting a chance: for  
this,

He chill'd the popular praises of the  
King

With silent smiles of slow disparage-  
ment;

And tamper'd with the Lords of the White  
Horse,



Heathen, the brood by Hengist left ; and  
sought  
To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end ; and all his  
aims  
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all  
the court,  
Green - suited, but with plumes that  
mock'd the may,  
Had been, their wont, a-maying and return'd,  
That Modred still in green, all ear and  
eye,

Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall  
To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her  
best

Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court  
The wildest and the worst ; and more than  
this

He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by  
Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand

Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,  
So from the high wall and the flowering  
grove

Of grass - s Lancelot pluck'd him by the  
heel,

And cast him as a worm upon the way ;  
But when he knew the Prince tho' marr'd  
with dust,

He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,  
Made such excuses as he might, and these  
Full knightly without scorn ; for in those  
days

No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in  
scorn ;

But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in  
him

By those whom God had made full-limb'd  
and tall,

Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
And he was answer'd softly by the King  
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help  
To raise the Prince, who rising twice or  
thrice

Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled,  
and went :

But, ever after, the small violence done  
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,  
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long  
A little bitter pool about a stone  
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told  
This matter to the Queen, at first she  
laugh'd

Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who  
cries

"I shudder, some one steps across my  
grave" ;

Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed

She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,  
Would track her guilt until he found,  
and hers

Would be for evermore a name of scorn.  
Henceforward rarely could she front in  
Hall,

Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,  
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent  
eye :

Henceforward too, the Powers that tend  
the soul,

To help it from the death that cannot die,  
And save it even in extremes, began  
To vex and plague her. Many a time  
for hours,

Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
In the dead night, grim faces came and  
went

Before her, or a vague spiritual fear —  
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking  
doors,

Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
That keeps the rust of murder on the  
walls —

Held her awake : or if she slept, she  
dream'd

An awful dream ; for then she seem'd to  
stand

On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
Before it, till it touch'd her, and she  
turn'd —

When lo ! her own, that broadening from  
her feet,

And blackening, swallow'd all the land,  
and in it

Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.  
And all this trouble did not pass but grew ;  
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless  
King,

And trustful courtesies of household life,  
Became her bane ; and at the last she said,  
"O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own  
land,

For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
And if we meet again, some evil chance

Will make the smouldering scandal break  
and blaze  
Before the people, and our lord the King.”  
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain’d,  
And still they met and met. Again she  
said,  
“O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee  
hence.”  
And then they were agreed upon a night  
(When the good Kings should not be there)  
to meet  
And part for ever. Passion-pale they met  
And greeted : hands in hands, and eye  
to eye,  
Low on the border of her couch they sat  
Stammering and staring : it was their last  
hour,  
A madness of farewells. And Modred  
brought  
His creatures to the basement of the tower  
For testimony ; and crying with full voice  
“Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,”  
aroused  
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
Leapt on him, and hurl’d him headlong,  
and he fell  
Stunn’d, and his creatures took and bare  
him off  
And all was still : then she, “the end is  
come  
And I am shamed for ever” ; and he said  
“Mine be the shame ; mine was the sin :  
but rise,  
And fly to my strong castle overseas :  
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
There hold thee with my life against the  
world.”  
She answer’d “Lancelot, wilt thou hold  
me so ?  
Nay friend, for we have taken our fare-  
wells.  
Would God, that thou couldst hide me  
from myself !  
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
Unwedded : yet rise now, and let us fly,  
For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
And bide my doom.” So Lancelot got  
her horse,  
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
And then they rode to the divided way,  
There kiss’d, and parted weeping : for he  
past,  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
Back to his land ; but she to Almesbury  
Fled all night long by glimmering waste  
and weald,

And heard the Spirits of the waste and  
weald  
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard  
them moan :  
And in herself she moan’d “too late, too  
late !”  
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the  
morn,  
A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
Croak’d, and she thought “he spies a  
field of death ;  
For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,  
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the  
court,  
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land.”  
And when she came to Almesbury she  
spake  
There to the nuns, and said, “mine  
enemies  
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask  
Her name, to whom ye yield it, till her  
time  
To tell you” : and her beauty, grace, and  
power  
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they  
spared  
To ask it.  
So the stately Queen abode  
For many a week, unknown, among the  
nuns ;  
Nor with them mix’d, nor told her name,  
nor sought,  
Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,  
But communed only with the little maid,  
Who pleased her with a babbling heed-  
lessness  
Which often lured her from herself ; but  
now,  
This night, a rumor wildly blown about  
Came, that Sir Modred had usurped the  
realm,  
And leagued him with the heathen, while  
the King  
Was waging war on Lancelot : then she  
thought,  
“With what a hate the people and the  
King  
Must hate me,” and bow’d down upon  
her hands  
Silent, until the little maid, who brook’d  
No silence, brake it, uttering “late ! so  
late !  
What hour, I wonder, now ?” and when  
she drew  
No answer, by and by began to hum

An air the nuns had taught her ; " late,  
so late ! "   
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd  
up, and said,  
" O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may  
weep."   
Whereat full willingly sang the little  
maid.

" Late, late, so late ! and dark the  
night and chill !   
Late, late, so late ! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.

" No light had we : for that we do re-  
pent ;   
And learning this, the bridegroom will  
relent.  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.

" No light : so late ! and dark and  
chill the night !   
O let us in, that we may find the light !  
Too late, too late : ye cannot enter now.

" Have we not heard the bridegroom  
is so sweet ?   
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet !  
No, no, too late ! ye cannot enter now."

So sang the novice, while full passion-  
ately,  
Her head upon her hands, remembering  
Her thought when first she came, wept  
the sad Queen.  
Then said the little novice prattling to her.

" O pray you, noble lady, weep no more ;  
But let my words, the words of one so  
small,  
Whoknowing nothing knows but to obey,  
And if I do not there is penance given —  
Comfort your sorrows ; for they do not  
flow  
From evil done ; right sure am I of that,  
Whosee your tender grace and stateliness.  
But weigh your sorrows with our lord  
the King's,  
And weighing find them less ; for gone  
is he  
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot  
there,  
Round that strong castle where he holds  
the Queen ;  
And Modred whom he left in charge of  
all,

The traitor — Ah sweet lady, the King's  
grief

For his own self, and his own Queen,  
and realm,

Must needs be thrice as great as any of  
ours.

For me, I thank the saints, I am not great.  
For if there ever come a grief to me  
I cry my cry in silence, and have done :  
None knows it, and my tears have brought  
me good :

But even were the griefs of little ones  
As great as those of great ones, yet this  
grief

Is added to the griefs the great must  
bear,

That howsoever much they may desire  
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud :  
As even here they talk at Almesbury  
About the good King and his wicked  
Queen,

And were I such a King with such a Queen,  
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,  
But were I such a King, it could not be."

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd  
the Queen.

" Will the child kill me with her inno-  
cent talk ? "

But openly she answer'd " must not I,  
If this false traitor have displaced his  
lord,

Grieve with the common grief of all the  
realm ? "

" Yea," said the maid, " this is all  
woman's grief,

That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table  
Round

Which good King Arthur founded, years  
ago,

With signs and miracles and wonders,  
there

At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen."

Then thought the Queen within her-  
self again ;

" Will the child kill me with her foolish  
prate ? "

But openly she spake and said to her ;  
" O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,

What canst thou know of Kings and  
Tables Round,

Or what of signs and wonders, but the  
signs

And simple miracles of thy nunnery ? "

To whom the little novice garrulously.  
 "Yea, but I know : the land was full of signs

And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
 So said my father, and himself was knight  
 Of the great Table — at the founding of it ;  
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he said

That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
 After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
 Strange music, and he paused and turning — there,

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
 Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
 And with a wild sea-light about his feet,  
 He saw them — headland after headland  
 flame

Far on into the rich heart of the west :  
 And in the light the white mermaiden  
 swam,

And strong man-breasted things stood  
 from the sea,

And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,  
 To which the little elves of chasm and  
 cleft

Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.  
 So said my father — yea, and furthermore,  
 Next morning, while he past the dim-lit  
 woods,

Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy  
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside  
 flower,

That shook beneath them, as the thistle  
 shakes

When three gray linnets wrangle for the  
 seed :

And still at evenings on before his horse  
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and  
 broke

Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd  
 and broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
 And when at last he came to Camelot,  
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
 Swung round the lighted lantern of the  
 hall ;

And in the hall itself was such a feast  
 As never man had dream'd ; for every  
 knight

Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
 By hands unseen ; and even as he said  
 Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the  
 butts

While the wine ran : so glad were spirits  
 and men

Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen and somewhat  
 bitterly.

"Were they so glad ? ill prophets were  
 they all,

Spirits and men : could none of them  
 foresee,

Not even they wise father with his signs  
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon the  
 realm ?"

To whom the novice garrulously again.

"Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my father  
 said,

Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
 Between the steep cliff and the coming  
 wave ;

And many a mystic lay of life and death  
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-  
 tops,

When round him bent the spirits of the  
 hills

With all their dewy hair blown back  
 like flame :

So said my father — and that night the  
 bard

Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang  
 the King

As well nigh more than man, and rail'd  
 at those

Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois :  
 For there was no man knew from whence  
 he came ;

But after tempest, when the long wave  
 broke

All down the thundering shores of Bude  
 and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and  
 then

They found a naked child upon the sands  
 Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea ;  
 And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd  
 him

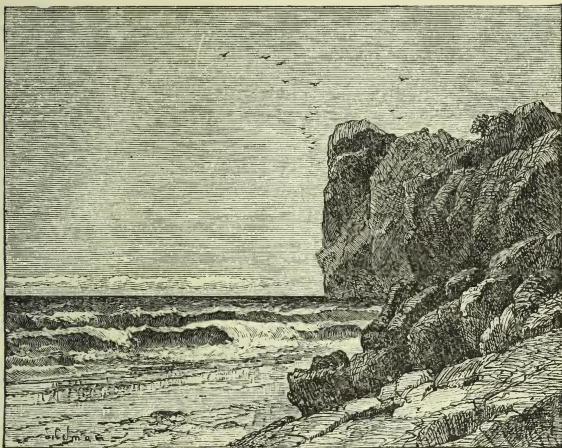
Till he by miracle was approven king :  
 And that his grave should be a mystery  
 From all men, like his birth ; and could  
 he find

A woman in her womanhood as great  
 As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
 The twain together well might change  
 the world.

But even in the middle of his song  
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,  
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and  
 would have fall'n,

But that they stay'd him up ; nor would  
 he tell





"The sands  
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea."

His vision ; but what doubt that he fore-  
saw  
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?"

Then thought the Queen "lo ! they  
have set her on,  
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,  
To play upon me," and bow'd her head  
nor spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd  
hands,  
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,  
Said the good nuns would check her gad-  
ding tongue

Full often, "and, sweet lady, if I seem  
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
Which my good father told, check me too:  
Nor let me shame my father's memory,  
one

Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say  
Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he died,  
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers  
back,

And left me ; but of others who remain,  
And of the two first-famed for courtesy—  
And pray you check me if I ask amiss—  
But pray you, which had noblest, while  
you moved

Among them, Lancelot or our lord the  
King?"

Then the pale Queen look'd up and an-  
swer'd her.

"Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and these  
two

Were the most nobly-mannered men of  
all ;

For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind."

"Yea," said the maid, "be manners  
such fair fruit ?

Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-  
sand-fold

Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,  
The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the  
Queen.

"O closed about by narrowing nunnery-  
walls,

What knowest thou of the world, and all  
its lights

And shadows, all the wealth and all the  
woe ?

If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
Were for one hour less noble than himself,

Pray for him that he scape the doom of  
fire,  
And weep for her, who drew him to his  
doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray  
for both ;  
But I should all as soon believe that his,  
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,  
As I could think, sweet lady, yours  
would be  
Such as they are, were you the sinful  
Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd  
where she would heal ;  
For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who  
cried,

"Such as thou art be never maiden more  
For ever ! thou their tool, set on to plague  
And play upon, and harry me, petty spy  
And traitress." When that storm of  
anger brake

From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,  
White as her veil, and stood before the  
Queen

As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
Stands in a wind, ready to break and  
fly,

And when the Queen had added "get  
thee hence"

Fled frightened. Then that other left alone  
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
Saying in herself "the simple, fearful  
child

Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful  
guilt

Simpler than any child, betrays itself.  
But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.  
For what is true repentance but in  
thought—

Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again  
The sins that made the past so pleasant  
to us :

And I have sworn never to see him more,  
To see him more."

And ev'n in saying this,  
Her memory from old habit of the mind  
Went slipping back upon the golden days  
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot  
came,  
Reputed the best knight and goodliest  
man,  
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord

Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for  
the time

Was maytime, and as yet no sin was  
dream'd,)

Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro'  
the earth,

And on from hill to hill, and every day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised  
For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before ; and on again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they  
saw

The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the  
King,

Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such  
a trance,

And moving thro' the past unconsciously,  
Came to that point where first she saw  
the King

Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to  
find

Her journey done, glanced at him,  
thought him cold,

High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not  
like him,

"Not like my Lancelot" — while she  
brooded thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts  
again,

There rode an armed warrior to the doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery

ran,  
Then on a sudden a cry, "the King."

She sat  
Stiff-stricken, listening ; but when armed  
feet

Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she  
fell,

And grovell'd with her face against the  
floor :

There with her milkwhite arms and shad-  
owly hair

She made her face a darkness from the  
King :

And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
Pause by her ; then came silence, then

a voice,

Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed  
the King's.

"Liest thou here so low, the child of  
one

I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame?  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
The children born of thee are sword and  
fire,

Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern  
Sea.

Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my  
right arm,

The mightiest of my knights, abode with  
me,

Have everywhere about this land of Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining over-  
thrown.

And knowest thou now from whence I  
come — from him,

From waging bitter war with him : and he,  
That did not shun to smite me in worse  
way,

Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,  
He spared to lift his hand against the King  
Who made him knight : but many a  
knight was slain ;

And many more, and all his kith and kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.  
And many more when Modred raised re-  
volt,

Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.  
And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
True men who love me still, for whom I  
live,

To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.  
Fear not : thou shalt be guarded till my  
death.

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my  
dread.

Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,  
That I the King should greatly care to live ;  
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.  
Bear with me for the last time while I show,  
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast  
sinn'd.

For when the Roman left us, and their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a  
deed

Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.

But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and  
all

The realms together under me, their Head,  
In that fair order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.  
I made them lay their hands in mine and  
swear

To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as  
their King,

To break the heathen and uphold the  
Christ,

To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her ; for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable  
words

And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a  
man.

And all this throve until I wedded thee !  
Believing, 'lo mine helpmate, one to feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy.'  
Then came thy shameful sin with Lance-  
lot ;

Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt ;  
Then others, following these my mightiest  
knights,

And drawing foul ensample from fair  
names,

Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,  
And all thro' thee ! so that this life of  
mine

I guard as God's high gift from scathe  
and wrong,

Not greatly care to lose ; but rather think  
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
And miss the wonted number of my  
knights,

And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
As in the golden days before thy sin.

For which of us, who might be left, could  
speak

Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at  
thee ?

And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk

Thy shadow still would glide from room  
to room,

And I should evermore be vexed with thee  
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.  
For think not, tho' thou wouldst not

love thy lord,

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
I am not made of so slight elements.

Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy  
shame.

I hold that man the worst of public foes  
Who either for his own or children's sake,  
To save his blood from scandal, lets the  
wife

Whom he knows false, abide and rule the  
house :

For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
Creeps, no precaution used, among the  
crowd,

Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and  
saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the  
pulse

With devil's leaps, and poisons half the  
young.

Worst of the worst were that man he that  
reigns !

Better the King's waste hearth and aching  
heart

Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
The mockery of my people, and their  
bane."

He paused, and in the pause she crept  
an inch

Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.

Then waiting by the doors the warhorse  
neigh'd

As at a friend's voice, and he spake again.

"Yet think not that I come to urge  
thy crimes,

I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
The wrath which forced my thoughts on  
that fierce law,

The doom of treason and the flaming death,  
(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is  
past.

The pang — which while I weigh'd thy  
heart with one

Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
Mademy tears burn — is also past, in part.  
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,  
Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
Forgives : do thou for thine own soul the  
rest.

But how to take last leave of all I loved ?  
O golden hair, with which I used to play  
Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded form,  
And beauty such as never woman wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with  
thee —

I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
But Lancelot's : nay, they never were  
the King's.

I cannot take thy hand ; that too is flesh,  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and  
mine own flesh,

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries  
' I loathe thee ' : yet notless, O Guinevere,  
For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into  
my life

So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
We two may meet before high God, and  
thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine,  
and know

I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me  
that,

I charge thee, my last hope. Now must  
I hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet  
blow :

They summon me their King to lead mine  
hosts

Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against the man  
they call

My sister's son — no kin of mine, who  
leagues

With lords of the White Horse, heathen,  
and knights —

Traitors — and strike him dead, and meet  
myself

Death, or I know not what mysterious  
doom.

And thou remaining here wilt learn the  
event ;

But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more,  
Farewell !"





“ And lo, he sat on horseback at the door !  
And near him the sad nuns with each a light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen.”

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er  
her neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,  
Perceived the waving of his hands that  
blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps  
were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish  
found  
The casement : “ peradventure ” so she  
thought,  
“ If I might see his face, and not be seen.”  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door !

And near him the sad nuns with each a  
light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about  
the Queen,  
To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm was  
lower'd,  
To which for crest the golden dragon clung  
Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the  
lights,  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of  
fire.

And even then he turn'd ; and more and more

The moony vapor rolling round the King,  
Whosem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray

And grayer, till himself became as mist  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and  
cried aloud

"O Arthur !" there her voice brake suddenly,

Then — as a stream that spouting from a cliff

Falls in mid air, but gathering at the base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale —

Went on in passionate utterance.

"Gone — my lord !

Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain !  
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.  
Farewell ? I should have answer'd his farewell.

His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,

My own true lord ! how dare I call him mine ?

The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
And makes me one pollution : he, the King,

Call'd me polluted : shall I kill myself ?  
What help in that ? I cannot kill my sin,

If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my shame ;  
No, nor by living can I live it down.

The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,

The months will add themselves and make the years,

The years will roll into the centuries,  
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.

I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
Let the world be ; that is but of the world.

What else ? what hope ? I think there was a hope,

Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope ;

His hope he call'd it ; but he never mocks,  
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven

My wickedness to him, and left me hope  
That in mine own heart I can live down sin

And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,

Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
Among his warring senses, to thy knights —

To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took

Full easily all impressions from below,  
Would not look up, or half-despised the height

To which I would not or I could not climb —

I thought I could not breathe in that fine air

That pure severity of perfect light —  
I wanted warmth and color which I found  
In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou art,

Thou art the highest and most human too,

Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
Will tell the King I love him tho' so late ?

Now — ere he goes to the great Battle ? none :

Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
What might I not have made of thy fair world,

Had I but loved thy highest creature here ?

It was my duty to have loved the highest :  
It surely was my profit had I known :  
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.

We needs must love the highest when we see it,

Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand  
Grasp'd, made her veil her eyes : she look'd and saw

The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her

"Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven ?"  
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
All round her, weeping ; and her heart was loosed

Within her, and she wept with these and said.

"Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke

The vast design and purpose of the King.  
O shut me round with narrowing nun-  
nery-walls,

Meek maidens, from the voices crying  
'shame.'

I must not scorn myself : he loves me  
still.

Let no one dream but that he loves me  
still.

So let me, if you do not shudder at me  
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with  
you ;

Wear black and white, and be a nun like  
you ;

Fast with your fasts, not feasting with  
your feasts ;

Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at  
your joys,

But not rejoicing ; mingle with your rites ;  
Pray and be pray'd for ; lie before your  
shrines ;

Do each low office of your holy house ;  
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute  
dole

To poor sick people, richer in his eyes  
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I ;  
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal  
mine own ;

And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer  
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,  
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the  
King."

She said : they took her to themselves ;  
and she

Still hoping, fearing " is it yet too late ?"  
Dwelt with them, till in time their Ab-  
bess died.

Then she, for her good deeds and her pure  
life,

And for the power of ministration in her,  
And likewise for the high rank she had  
borne,

Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess,  
lived

For three brief years, and there, an Ab-  
bess, past

To where beyond these voices there is  
peace.

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,  
First made and latest left of all the knights,  
Told, when the man was no more than a  
voice

In the white winter of his age, to those  
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other  
minds.

Before that last weird battle in the west  
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain  
kill'd

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain  
blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his ear  
Went shrilling " Hollow, hollow all de-  
light !

Hail, king ! to-morrow thou shalt pass  
away.

Farewell ! there is an isle of rest for thee.  
And I am blown along a wandering wind,  
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight."

And fainter onward, like wild birds that  
change

Their season in the night and wail their  
way

From cloud to cloud, down the long wind  
the dream

Shrill'd ; but in going mingled with dim  
cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,  
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,  
When all is lost, and wife and child  
with wail

Pass to new lords ; and Arthur woke  
and call'd,

" Who spake ? A dream. O light upon  
the wind.

Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are  
these dim cries

Thine ? or doth all that haunts the  
waste and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with  
me ?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and  
spake :

" O me, my king, let pass whatever will,  
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the  
field ;

But in their stead thy name and glory  
cling

To all high places like a golden cloud  
For ever : but as yet thou shalt not pass.

Light was Gawain in life, and light in  
death

Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man ;  
And care not thou for dreams from him,  
but rise —

I hear the steps of Modred in the west,  
And with him many of thy people and  
knights

Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but  
grosser grown

Than heathen, spitting at their vows  
and thee.



Right well in heart they know thee for  
the king.  
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

"Far other is this battle in the west  
Whereto we move, than when we strove  
in youth,

And thrust the heathen from the Roman  
wall,

And shook him thro' the north. Ill  
doom is mine

To war against my people and my knights.  
The king who fights his people fights him-  
self.

And they my knights, who loved me  
once, the stroke

That strikes them dead is as my death  
to me.

Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way  
Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I  
saw

One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the king and moved his host  
by night,

And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by  
league,

Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse —  
A land of old upheaven from the abyss

By fire, to sink into the abyss again ;  
Where fragments of forgotten peoples  
dwelt,

And the long mountains ended in a coast  
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.

There the pursuer could pursue no more,  
And he that fled no further fly the king ;  
And there, that day when the great light  
of heaven

Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,  
On the waste sand by the waste sea they  
closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight  
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the  
west.

A deathwhite mistslept oversand and sea :  
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed  
it, drew

Down with his blood, till all his heart  
was cold

With formless fear : and ev'n on Arthur  
fell

Confusion, since he saw not whom he  
fought,

For friend and foe were shadows in the  
mist,

And friend slew friend not knowing whom  
he slew ;

And some had visions out of golden youth,  
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts

Look in upon the battle ; and in the mist  
Was many a noble deed, many a base,

And chance and craft and strength in  
single fights,

And ever and anon with host to host  
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the

hard mail hewn,  
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,

the crash  
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helmets, and

shrieks  
After the Christ, of those who falling down

Looked up for heaven, and only saw the  
mist ;

And shouts of heathen and the traitor  
knights,

Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blas-  
phemies,

Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of  
the lungs

In that close mist, and cryings for the  
light,

Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail  
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death  
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that  
shore,

Save for some whisper of the seething seas,  
A dead hush fell ; but when the dolorous

day  
Grew drearier toward twilight falling,

came  
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and

blew  
The mist aside, and with that wind the

tide  
Rose, and the pale king glanced across  
the field

Of battle : but no man was moving there ;  
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,

Nor yet of heathen ; only the wan wave  
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro

Swaying the helpless hands, and up and  
down

Tumbling the hollow helmets, of the  
fallen,

And shiver'd brands that once had fought  
with Rome,

And rolling far along the gloomy shores  
The voice of days of old and days to be.



Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,  
And whiter than the mist that all day long  
Had held the field of battle was the King :

“Hearest thou this great voice that  
shakes the world,  
And wastes the narrow realm whereon  
we move,  
And beats upon the faces of the dead,  
My dead, as tho’ they had not died for  
me ? —

O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall’n  
Confusion, till I know not what I am,  
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king.  
Behold, I seem but king among the dead.”

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere :  
“ My King,  
King everywhere ! and so the dead have  
kings,  
There also will I worship thee as king.  
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live  
Who love thee ; but who hates thee, he  
that brought  
The heathen back among us, yonder  
stands,  
Modred, unharm’d, the traitor of thine  
house.”

Then spake the King : “ My house hath  
been my doom.  
But call not thou this traitor of my house  
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof  
with me.  
My house are rather they who sware my  
vows,  
Yea, even while they brake them, own’d  
me king.  
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,  
When all the purport of my throne hath  
fail’d,  
That quick or dead thou holdest me for  
king.  
King am I, whatsoever be their cry ;  
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see  
Yet, ere I pass.” And uttering this the  
king  
Made at the man : then Modred smote  
his liege  
Hard on that helm which many a heathen  
sword  
Had beaten thin ; while Arthur at one  
blow,  
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,  
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he  
fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll’d  
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;  
Until King Arthur’s Table, man by man,  
Had fall’n in Lyonesse about their lord,  
King Arthur. Then, because his wound  
was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land :  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
“ The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such  
a sleep  
They sleep — the men I loved. I think  
that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made, —  
Tho’ Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more ; but let what will be,  
be.

I am so deeply smitten thro’ the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride : for thou remem-  
berest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an  
arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful,  
Holding the sword — and how I row’d  
across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a  
king ;  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known :  
But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere :  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
me word.”

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :  
“ It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro’ the  
helm —  
A little thing may harm a wounded man ;

Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
stept,  
And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
stepping down  
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-  
bur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against  
the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere :  
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which  
I gave ?  
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast  
heard ?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere :  
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale :  
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy  
name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,

Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me  
word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought ;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he  
smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud :

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the  
earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men.  
What good should follow this, if this  
were done ?  
What harm, undone ? Deep harm to  
disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself ?  
The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumors of a doubt ? But were this  
kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty  
kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of  
arms,  
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the  
deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'  
So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honor and much fame  
were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :

“What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

“I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.”

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

“Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.”

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the  
noon,

And flashing round and round, and  
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath :

“Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard,  
or seen?”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere :

“Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest  
the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him,  
wheeling him ;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

That caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.”

And answer made King Arthur, breath-  
ing hard :

“My end draws nigh ; 't is time that I  
were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
weight,

And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall  
die.”

So saying, from the pavement he half  
rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found  
not words ;

Then took with care, and kneeling on  
one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of  
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted  
hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd  
the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear  
“Quick, quick !

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.”  
But the other swiftly strode from ridge  
to ridge,

Cloth'd with his breath, and looking, as  
 he walk'd,  
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
 He heard the deep behind him, and a  
 cry  
 Before. His own thought drove him like  
 a goad.  
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and  
 right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
 as he bas'd  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
 heels —  
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky  
 barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
 Beneath them ; and descending they were  
 ware  
 That all the decks were dense with stately  
 forms,  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream  
 — by these  
 Three Queens with crowns of gold : and  
 from them rose  
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
 And, as it were one voice, an agony  
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
 All night in a waste land, where no one  
 comes,  
 Or hath come, since the making of the  
 world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, " Place me  
 in the barge " ;  
 So to the barge they came. There those  
 three Queens  
 Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
 and wept.  
 But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
 And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
 chafed his hands,  
 And call'd him by his name, complaining  
 loud,  
 And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
 Striped with dark blood : for all his face  
 was white  
 And colorless, and like the wither'd moon  
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing  
 east ;  
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
 with drops

Of onset ; and the light and lustrous  
 curls —  
 That made his forehead like a rising sun  
 High from the dais-throne — were parch'd  
 with dust ;  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
 fringed his lips.  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in  
 rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-  
 vere :  
 " Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I  
 go ?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
 eyes ?  
 For now I see the true old times are dead,  
 When every morning brought a noble  
 chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble  
 knight.  
 Such times have been not since the light  
 that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole Round Table is dis-  
 solved  
 Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
 And the days darken round me, and the  
 years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other  
 minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the  
 barge :  
 " The old order changeth, yielding place  
 to new,  
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
 world.  
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I  
 have done  
 May He within himself make pure ! but  
 thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are  
 wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,  
 let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and  
 day.



For what are men better than sheep or  
goats  
That nourish a blind life within the  
brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every  
way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long  
way  
With these thou seest — if indeed I go  
(For all my mind is clouded with a  
doubt) —  
To the island-valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-  
lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with sum-  
mer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and  
sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir  
Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge  
of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

At length he groan'd, and turning  
slowly clomb  
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;  
Thence mark'd the black hull moving  
yet, and cried,  
"He passes to be king among the dead,  
And after healing of his grievous wound  
He comes again; but — if he come no  
more —  
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black  
boat,  
Whoshriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat  
we gazed  
On that high day, when, clothed with  
living light,  
They stood before his throne in silence,  
friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there  
came, but faint  
As from beyond the limit of the world,  
Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
Sounds, as if some fair city were one  
voice  
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about,  
and clomb  
E'en to the highest he could climb, and  
saw,  
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,  
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare  
the king,  
Down that long water opening on the deep  
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go  
From less to less and vanish into light.  
And the new sun rose bringing the new  
year.

# THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY.

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TO

HENRY LUSHINGTON

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED BY HIS FRIEND

A. TENNYSON.

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## PROLOGUE.

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day  
 Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
 Up to the people : thither flock'd at noon  
 His tenants, wife and child, and thither  
 half  
 The neighboring borough with their In-  
 stitute  
 Of which he was the patron. I was there  
 From college, visiting the son, — the son  
 A Walter too, — with others of our set,  
 Five others : we were seven at Vivian-  
 place.

And me that morning Walter show'd  
 the house,  
 Greek, set with busts : from vases in the  
 hall  
 Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than  
 their names,  
 Grew side by side ; and on the pavement  
 lay  
 Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the  
 park,  
 Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of  
 Time :

And on the tables every clime and age  
 Jumbled together ; celts and calumets,  
 Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans  
 Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
 Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
 The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-  
 clubs  
 From the isles of palm : and higher on  
 the walls,  
 Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and  
 deer,  
 His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And "this" he said "was Hugh's at  
 Aginecirt ;  
 And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon :

A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle  
 With all about him" — which he brought,  
 and I  
 Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with  
 knights  
 Half-legend, half-historic, counts and  
 kings  
 Who laid about them at their wills and  
 died ;  
 And mixt with these, a lady, one that  
 arm'd  
 Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the  
 gate,  
 Had beat her foes with slaughter from  
 her walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,  
 "O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
 By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
 Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a sol-  
 dier's death,  
 But now when all was lost or seem'd as  
 lost —  
 Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
 Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire —  
 Brake with a blast of trumpets from the  
 gate,  
 And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
 She trampled some beneath her horses'  
 heels,  
 And some were whelm'd with missiles of  
 the wall,  
 And some were push'd with lances from  
 the rock,  
 And part were drown'd within the whirl-  
 ing brook :  
 O miracle of noble womanhood !"

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle ;  
 And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he  
 said,  
 "To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth  
 And sister Lilia with the rest." We went

(I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
 Down thro' the park : strange was the  
 sight to me ;  
 For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,  
 sown  
 With happy faces and with holiday.  
 There moved the multitude, a thousand  
 heads :  
 The patient leaders of their Institute  
 Taught them with facts. One rear'd a  
 font of stone  
 And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
 The fountain of the moment, playing now  
 A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
 Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
 Danced like a wisp : and somewhat low-  
 er down  
 A man with knobs and wires and vials  
 fired  
 A cannon : Echo answer'd in her sleep  
 From hollow fields : and here were tele-  
 scopes  
 For azure views ; and there a group of  
 girls  
 In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
 Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter :  
 round the lake  
 A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
 And shook the lilies : perch'd about the  
 knolls  
 A dozen angry models jetted steam :  
 A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon  
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
 And dropt a fairy parachute and past :  
 And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
 They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
 Between the mimic stations ; so that sport  
 Went hand in hand with Science ; other-  
 where  
 Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamor  
 bowl'd  
 And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd  
 about  
 Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men  
 and maids  
 Arranged a country dance, and flew thro'  
 light  
 And shadow, while the twangling violin  
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and over-  
 head  
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
 Made noise with bees and breeze from  
 end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of  
 the time ;  
 And long we gazed, but satiated at length

Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-  
 claspt,  
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost  
 they gave  
 The park, the crowd, the house ; but all  
 within  
 The sward was trim as any garden lawn :  
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
 From neighbor seats : and there was  
 Ralph himself,  
 A broken statue propt against the wall,  
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
 Half child half woman as she was, had  
 wound  
 A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
 That made the old warrior from his ivied  
 nook  
 Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a  
 feast  
 Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the guests,  
 And there we join'd them : then the  
 maiden Aunt  
 Took this fair day for text, and from it  
 preach'd  
 An universal culture for the crowd,  
 And all things great ; but we, unwor-  
 thier, told  
 Of college : he had climb'd across the  
 spikes,  
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt  
 the bars,  
 And he had breath'd the Proctor's dogs ;  
 and one  
 Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common  
 men,  
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;  
 And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
 Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their  
 heads I saw  
 The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which  
 brought  
 My book to mind : and opening this I  
 read  
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
 With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her  
 That drove her foes with slaughter from  
 her walls,  
 And much I praised her nobleness, and  
 "Where,"  
 Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
 Beside him) "lives there such a woman  
 now ?"

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thou-  
sands now  
Such women, but convention beats them  
down :

It is but bringing up ; no more than that :  
You men have done it : how I hate you all !  
Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you  
then,

That love to keep us children ! O I wish  
That I were some great princess, I would  
build

Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are  
taught ;

We are twice as quick !" And here she  
shook aside

The hand that play'd the patron with  
her curls.

And one said smiling "Pretty were the  
sight

If our old halls could change their sex,  
and flaunt

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for  
deans,

And sweet girl-graduates in their golden  
hair.

I think they should not wear our rusty  
gowns,

But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or  
Ralph

Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lilies in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the  
nest,

Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot :

"That's your light way ; but I would  
make it death

For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she  
laugh'd ;

A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make  
her, she :

But Walter hail'd a score of names upon  
her,

And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful  
Puss,"

And swore he long'd at college, only  
long'd,

All else was well, for she-society.

They boated and they cricketed ; they  
talk'd

At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;  
They lost their weeks ; they vex the souls  
of deans ;

They rode ; they betted ; made a hun-  
dred friends,

And caught the blossom of the flying  
terms,

But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-  
place,

The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he  
spoke,

Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,  
"We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd  
us much.

I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you  
did."

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns  
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
And bites it for true heart and not for  
harm,

So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
And wrung it. "Doubt my word again !"   
he said.

"Come, listen ! here is proof that you  
were miss'd :

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read ;  
And there we took one tutor as to read :  
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and  
square

Were out of season : never man, I think,  
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he :  
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,  
And our long walks were stript as bare  
as brooms,

We did but talk you over, pledge you  
all

In wassail ; often, like as many girls —  
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home —  
As many little trifling Lilies — play'd  
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,  
And *what's my thought* and *when* and  
*where* and *how*,

And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that :  
A pleasant game, she thought : she liked  
it more

Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
But these — what kind of tales did men  
tell men,

She wonder'd, by themselves ?

A half-disdain  
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips :  
And Walter nodded at me ; "*He* began,



The rest would follow, each in turn ; and  
so  
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ?  
what kind ?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmassolecisms,  
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,  
The tyrant! kill him in the summer  
too,"

Said Lilia ; " Why not now," the maiden  
Aunt.

" Why not a summer's as a winter's tale ?  
A tale for summer as befits the time,  
And something it should be to suit the  
place

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
Grave, solemn !"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
To something so mock-solemn, that I  
laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling  
mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden Aunt  
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her  
face

With color) turn'd to me with "As you  
will ;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine" clam-  
or'd he,

"And make her some great Princess, six  
feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal ; and be you  
The Prince to win her !"

"Then follow me, the Prince,"  
I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn !  
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a  
dream. —

Heroic seems our Princess as required —  
But something made to suit with Time  
and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experi-  
ments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt  
them all —

This *were* a medley ! we should have him  
back

Who told the 'Winter's tale' to do it  
for us.

No matter : we will say whatever comes.  
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,

From time to time, some ballad or a song  
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,  
And therest follow'd : and the women sang  
Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :  
And here I give the story and the songs.

## I.

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in  
face,

Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlets, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our  
house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire  
burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,  
Dying, that none of all our blood should  
know

The shadow from the substance, and that  
one

Should come to fight with shadows and  
to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran.  
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or  
less,

An old and strange affection of the house.  
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven  
knows what :

On a sudden in the midst of men and day.  
And while I walk'd and talk'd as here-  
tofore,

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.  
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head  
cane,

And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd  
"catalepsy."

My mother pitying made a thousand  
prayers ;

My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness :  
But my good father thought a king a  
king ;

He cared not for the affection of the house ;  
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms and  
hands

Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from  
the mass

For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade, be-  
troth'd

To one, a neighboring Princess : she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old ; and still from time  
to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the  
South,

And of her brethren, youths of puissance ;  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress ; and all around them  
both

Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about  
their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I  
should wed,

My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her : these  
brought back

A present, a great labor of the loom ;  
And therewithal an answer vague as  
wind :

Besides, they saw the king ; he took the  
gifts ;

He said there was a compact ; that was  
true :

But then she had a will ; was he to blame ?  
And maiden fancies ; loved to live alone  
Among her women ; certain, would not  
wed.

That morning in the presence room I  
stood

With Cyril and with Florian, my two  
friends :

The first, a gentleman of broken means  
(His father's fault) but given to starts  
and bursts

Of revel ; and the last, my other heart,  
And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my  
father's face

Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
Inflamed with wrath ; he started on his  
feet,

Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,  
and rent

The wonder of the loom thro' warp and  
woof

From skirt to skirt ; and at the last he  
swore

That he would send a hundred thousand  
men,

And bring her in a whirlwind . then he  
chew'd

The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and  
cook'd his spleen,

Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. "My father, let me  
go.

It cannot be but some gross error lies  
In this report, this answer of a king,  
Whom all men rate as kind and hospi-  
table :

Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
Whate'er my grief to find her less than  
fame,

May rue the bargain made." And Flo-  
rian said :

"I have a sister at the foreign court,  
Who moves about the Princess ; she,  
you know,

Who wedded with a nobleman from  
thence :

He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
The lady of three castles in that land :  
Thro' her this matter might be sifted  
clean."

And Cyril whisper'd : "Take me with  
you too."

Then laughing "what, if these weird  
seizures come

Upon you in those lands, and no one near  
To point you out the shadow from the  
truth !

Take me : I'll serve you better in a strait ;  
I grate on rusty hinges here" : but

"No !"

Roar'd the rough king, "you shall not ;  
we ourself

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
In iron gauntlets : break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and  
past

Thro' the wild woods that hung about the  
town ;

Found a still place, and pluck'd her like-  
ness out ;

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying  
bathed

In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees :  
What were those fancies ? wherefore break  
her troth ?

Proud look'd the lips : but while I medi-  
tated

A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
And shook the songs, the whispers, and  
the shrieks

Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice  
Went with it, " Follow, follow, thou shalt  
win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
Became her golden shield, I stole from  
court  
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in  
dread  
To hear my father's clamor at our backs  
With Ho ! from some bay-window shake  
the night ;  
But all was quiet : from the bastion'd  
walls  
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we  
dropt,  
And flying reach'd the frontier : then we  
crost  
To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and  
grange,  
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilder-  
ness,  
We gain'd the mother-city thick with  
towers,  
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and small  
his voice,  
But bland the smile that like a wrink-  
ling wind  
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines ;  
A little dry old man, without a star,  
Not like a king : three days he feasted us,  
And on the fourth I spake of why we  
came,  
And my betroth'd. " You do us, Prince,"  
he said,  
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,  
" All honor. We remember love ourselves  
In our sweet youth : there did a com-  
pact pass  
Long summers back, a kind of cere-  
mony —  
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.  
I would you had her, Prince, with all  
my heart,  
With my full heart : but there were  
widows here,  
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;  
They fed her theories, in and out of place  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harp'd on this ; with this our ban-  
quets rang ;  
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of  
talk ;

Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot  
To hear them : knowledge, so my daugh-  
ter held,

Was all in all : they had but been, she  
thought,  
As children ; they must lose the child,  
assume

The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she  
wrote,

Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
But all she is and does is awful ; odes  
About this losing of the child ; and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;  
And they that know such things — I  
sought but peace ;

No critic I — would call them master-  
pieces :

They master'd me. At last she begg'd a  
boon

A certain summer-palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,  
Yet being an easy man, gave it : and there,  
All wild to found an University  
For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and  
more

We know not, — only this : they see no  
men,

Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look  
upon her

As on a kind of paragon ; and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loath  
to breed

Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but  
since

(And I confess with right) you think me  
bound

In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your  
chance

Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king ;  
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all  
frets

But chafing me on fire to find my bride)  
Went forth again with both my friends.

We rode

Many a long league back to the North.  
At last

From hills, that look'd across a land of  
hope,

We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
Close at the boundary of the liberties ;

There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine  
 host  
 To council, plied him with his richest  
 wines,  
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the  
 king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
 As blank as death in marble; then ex-  
 claim'd  
 Averring it was clear against all rules  
 For any man to go: but as his brain  
 Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,  
 "Had given us letters, was he bound to  
 speak?

The king would bear him out"; and at  
 the last —

The summer of the vine in all his veins —  
 "No doubt that we might make it worth  
 his while.

She once had past that way; he heard  
 her speak;  
 She scared him; life! he never saw the like;  
 She look'd as grand as doomsday and as  
 grave:

And he, he revered his liege-lady there;  
 He always made a point to post with mares;  
 His daughter and his housemaid were  
 the boys:

The land, he understood, for miles about  
 Was till'd by women; all the swine were  
 sows,

And all the dogs" —

But while he jested thus,  
 A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed  
 in act,

Remembering how we three presented  
 Maid

Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of  
 feast,

In masque or pageant at my father's court.  
 We sent mine host to purchase female  
 gear;

He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake  
 The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
 To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes  
 We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe  
 To guerdon silence, mounted our good  
 steeds,

And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
 And rode till midnight when the college  
 lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
 And linden alley: then we past an arch,  
 Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings

From four wing'd horses dark against  
 the stars;

And some inscription ran along the front,  
 But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd  
 A little street half garden and half house;  
 But scarce could hear each other speak  
 for noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver ham-  
 mers falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
 Of fountains spouted up and showering  
 down

In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:  
 And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
 Rapt in hersong, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
 By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven  
 and Earth

With constellation and with continent,  
 Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;  
 A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable  
 wench

Came running at the call, and help'd us  
 down.

Then stopt a buxom hostess forth, and  
 sail'd,

Full-blown, before us into rooms which  
 gave

Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
 In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,  
 And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche"

she said,  
 "And Lady Psyche." "Which was  
 prettiest,  
 Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers  
 are we,"

One voice, we cried; and I sat down and  
 wrote,

In such a hand as when a field of corn  
 Bows all its ears before the roaring East;

"Three ladies of the Northern empire  
 pray

Your Highness would enroll them with  
 your own,

As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd:  
 The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
 And raised the blinding bandage from  
 his eyes:

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;  
 And then to bed, where half in doze I  
 seem'd

To float about a glimmering night, and  
 watch



A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight,  
swell  
On some dark shore just seen that it was  
rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
O we fell out I know not why,  
And kiss'd again with tears.  
And blessings on the falling out  
That all the more endears,  
When we fall out with those we love  
And kiss again with tears !  
For when we came where lies the child  
We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
O there above the little grave,  
We kiss'd again with tears.

## II.

At break of day the College Portress came :  
She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
And zoned with gold ; and now when  
these were on,  
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,  
She, curtsying her obeisance, let us know  
The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,  
I first, and following thro' the porch that  
sang  
All round with laurel, issued in a court  
Compact with lucid marbles, boss'd with  
lengths  
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns  
of flowers.  
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in  
threes,  
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst ;  
And here and there on lattice edges lay  
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,  
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,  
With two tame leopards couch'd beside  
her throne  
All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant  
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
Than our man's earth ; such eyes were  
in her head,  
And so much grace and power, breathing  
down

From over her arch'd brows, with every  
turn  
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long  
hands,  
And to her feet. She rose her height,  
and said :

“We give you welcome : not without  
redound  
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime,  
And that full voice which circles round  
the grave,  
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with  
me.  
What ! are the ladies of your land so tall ?”  
“We of the court” said Cyril. “From  
the court”  
She answer'd, “then ye know the Prince ?”  
and he :  
“The climax of his age ! as tho' there were  
One rose in all the world, your Highness  
that,  
He worships your ideal” : she replied :  
“We scarcely thought in our own hall  
to hear  
This barren verbiage, current among men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
Your flight from out your bookless wilds  
would seem  
As arguing love of knowledge and of  
power ;  
Your language proves you still the child.  
Indeed,  
We dream not of him : when we set our  
hand  
To this great work, we purposed with  
ourselves  
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
The tricks, which make us toys of men,  
that so,  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our lords  
ally  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale  
with scale.”

At those high words, we conscious of  
ourselves,  
Perused the matting ; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as  
these :  
Not for three years to correspond with  
home ;  
Not for three years to cross the liberties ;  
Not for three years to speak with any men ;

And many more, which hastily sub-  
scribed,  
We enter'd on the boards : and "Now"  
she cried  
"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.  
Look, our hall !  
Our statues !—not of those that men  
desire,  
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ; but  
she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and  
she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman  
brows  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose  
Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. O lift your na-  
tures up :  
Embrace our aims : work out your free-  
dom. Girls,  
Knowledge is now no more a fountain  
seal'd :  
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us : you may  
go :  
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before ;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive."  
She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal : back again we crost the court  
To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,  
There sat along the forms, like morning  
doves  
That sun their milky bosoms on the  
thatch,  
A patient range of pupils ; she herself  
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-  
eyed,  
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
Aglaiā slept. We sat : the Lady glanced :  
Then Florian, but no livelier than the  
dame  
That whisper'd "Asses' ears" among the  
sedge,

"My sister." "Comely too by all that's  
fair"  
Said Cyril. "O hush, hush !" and she  
began.

"This world was once a fluid haze of  
light,  
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
The planets : then the monster, then the  
man ;  
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
Raw from the prime, and crushing down  
his mate ;  
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here  
Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took  
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious  
past ;  
Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
As emblematic of a nobler age ;  
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of  
those  
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo ;  
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman  
lines  
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
How far from just ; till warming with  
her theme  
She fulminated her scorn of laws Salique  
And little-footed China, touch'd on Ma-  
homet  
With much contempt, and came to chiv-  
alry :  
When some respect, however slight, was  
paid  
To woman, superstition all awry :  
However then commenced the dawn : a  
beam  
Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep,  
indeed,  
Their debt of thanks to her who first had  
dared  
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
Disyoke their necks from custom, and  
assert  
None lordlier than themselves but that  
which made  
Woman and man. She had founded ;  
they must build.  
Here might they learn whatever men  
were taught :  
Let them not fear : some said their heads  
were less :  
Some men's were small ; not they the  
least of men ;

For often fineness compensated size :  
 Besides the brain was like the hand, and  
     grew  
 With using ; thence the man's, if more  
     was more ;  
 He took advantage of his strength to be  
 First in the field : some ages had been lost ;  
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
 Was longer ; and albeit their glorious  
     names  
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in  
     truth  
 The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of the  
     glebe,  
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so  
 With woman : and in arts of government  
 Elizabeth and others ; arts of war  
 The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace  
 Sappho and others vied with any man :  
 And, last not least, she who had left her  
     place,  
 And bow'd her state to them, that they  
     might grow  
 To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the  
     blight  
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
 Dilating on the future ; " everywhere  
 Two heads in council, two beside the  
     hearth,  
 Two in the tangled business of the world,  
 Two in the liberal offices of life,  
 Two plummets dropt for one to sound  
     the abyss  
 Of science, and the secrets of the mind :  
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :  
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous  
     Earth  
 Should bear a double growth of those rare  
     souls,  
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood  
 of the world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us : the  
     rest  
 Parted ; and, glowing full-faced welcome,  
     she  
 Began to address us, and was moving on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all  
     her voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat,  
     she cried

" My brother ! " " Well, my sister. " " O "  
     she said  
 " What do you here ? and in this dress ?  
     and these ?  
 Why who are these ? a wolf within the  
     fold !  
 A pack of wolves ! the Lord be gracious  
     to me !  
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all ! "  
 " No plot, no plot, " he answer'd.  
     " Wretched boy,  
 How saw you not the inscription on the  
     gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF  
     DEATH ? "  
 " And if I had " he answer'd " who could  
     think  
 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such  
 As chanted on the blanching bones of  
     men ? "  
 " But you will find it otherwise " she said.  
 " You jest : ill jesting with edge-tools !  
     my vow  
 Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
 That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
 The Princess. " " Well then, Psyche,  
     take my life,  
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
 For warning : bury me beside the gate,  
 And cut this epitaph above my bones ;  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
 All for the common good of womankind. "*  
 " Let me die too " said Cyril " having seen  
 And heard the Lady Psyche. "

I struck in :

" Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the  
     truth ;  
 Receive it ; and in me behold the Prince  
 Your countryman, affianced years ago  
 To the Lady Ida : here, for here she was,  
 And thus (what other way was left) I  
     came. "  
 " O Sir, O Prince, I have no country ;  
     none ;  
 If any, this ; but none. Whate'er I was  
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
 Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may not  
     breathe  
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,  
 Who am not mine, say, live : the thun-  
     derbolt  
 Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it  
     falls. "  
 " Yet pause, " I said : " for that inscrip-  
     tion there,  
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,

Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more  
there be,

If more and acted on, what follows? war;  
Your own work marr'd: for this your  
Academe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo  
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
With all fair theories only made to gild  
A stormless summer." "Let the Princess  
judge

Of that" she said: "farewell Sir — and  
to you.

I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche" I rejoin'd,  
"The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall  
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he  
fell,

And all else fled: we point to it, and we  
say,

The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
But branches current yet in kindred  
veins."

"Are you that Psyche" Florian added  
"she

With whom I sang about the morning  
hills,

Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple  
fly,

And snared the squirrel of the glen? are  
you

That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing  
brow,

To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming  
draught

Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams? are  
you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
You were that Psyche, but what are you  
now?"

"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for  
whom

I would be that for ever which I seem,  
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
And glean your scatter'd sapience."

Then once more,

"Are you that Lady Psyche" I began,  
"That on her bridal morn before she past  
From all her old companions, when the  
king

Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that an-  
cient ties

Would still be dear beyond the southern  
hills;

That were there any of our people there  
In want or peril, there was one to hear  
And help them: look! for such are these  
and I."

"Are you that Psyche" Florian ask'd  
"to whom,

In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
Came flying while you sat beside the well?  
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and  
the blood

Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you  
wept.

That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet  
you wept.

O by the bright head of my little niece,  
You were that Psyche, and what are you  
now?"

"You are that Psyche" Cyril said again,  
"The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
That ever crow'd for kisses."

"Out upon it!"

She answer'd, "peace! and why should  
I not play

The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
Him you call great: he for the common  
weal,

The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
As I might slay this child, if good need  
were,

Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on  
whom

The secular emancipation turns  
Of half this world, be swerved from right  
to save

A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for  
you.

O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear  
My conscience will not count me fleck-  
less; yet —

Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise  
You perish) as you came, to slip away,  
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,  
These women were too barbarous, would  
not learn;

They fled, who might have shamed us:  
promise, all."

What could we else, we promised each;  
and she,

Like some wild creature newly-caged,  
commenced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused



By Florian ; holding out her lily arms  
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly  
said :

"I knew you at the first : tho' you have  
grown

You scarce have alter'd : I am sad and  
glad

To see you, Florian. I give thee to death  
My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.  
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
Our mother, is she well ?"

With that she kiss'd  
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung  
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd  
up

From out a common vein of memory  
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the  
hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dew  
Began to glisten and to fall : and while  
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a  
voice,

"I brought a message here from Lady  
Blanche."

Back started she, and turning round we  
saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where she  
stood,

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
That clad her like an April daffodilly  
(Her mother's color) with her lips apart,  
And all her thoughts as fair within her  
eyes,

As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the  
door.

Then Lady Psyche "Ah — Melissa —  
you !

You heard us ?" and Melissa, "O pardon  
me ;

I heard, I could not help it, did not wish :  
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
Nor think I bear that heart within my  
breast,

To give three gallant gentlemen to death."

"I trust you" said the other "for we two  
Were always friends, none closer, elm and  
vine :

But yet your mother's jealous tempera-  
ment —

Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse,  
or prove

The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear  
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose

My honor, these their lives." "Ah,  
fear me not"

Replied Melissa "no — I would not tell,  
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
No, not to answer, Madam, all those  
hard things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."

"Be it so" the other "that we still may  
lead

The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."

Said Cyril "Madam, he the wisest man  
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
Of Lebanonian cedar : nor should you  
(Tho' madam you should answer, we  
would ask)

Less welcome find among us, if you came  
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
Myself for something more." He said  
not what,

But "Thanks," she answer'd "go : we  
have been too long

Together : keep your hoods about the face ;  
They do so that affect abstraction here.

Speak little ; mix not with the rest ; and  
hold

Your promise : all, I trust, may yet be  
well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the  
child,

And held her round the knees against  
his waist,

And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trum-  
peter,

While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and  
the child

Push'd her flat hand against his face and  
laugh'd ;

And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd  
For half the day thro' stately theatres  
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat,  
we heard

The grave Professor. On the lecture slate  
The circle rounded under female hands  
With flawless demonstration : follow'd  
then

A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-  
long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all  
Time

Sparkle for ever : then we dipt in all  
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,

The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
 The morals, something of the frame, the  
     rock,  
 The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the  
     flower,  
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
 And whatsoever can be taught and  
     known ;  
 Till like three horses that have broken  
     fence,  
 And glutted all night long breast-deep  
     in corn,  
 We issued gorged with knowledge, and I  
     spoke :  
 " Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as  
     we."  
 " They hunt old trails " said Cyril " very  
     well ;  
 But when did woman ever yet invent ? "  
 " Ungracious ! " answer'd Florian, " have  
     you learnt  
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you that  
     talk'd  
 The trash that made me sick, and almost  
     sad ? "  
 " O trash " he said " but with a kernel in it.  
 Should I not call her wise, who made me  
     wise ?  
 And learnt ? I learnt more from her in  
     a flash,  
 Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
 And round these halls a thousand baby  
     loves  
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the  
     hearts,  
 Whence follows many a vacant pang ;  
     but O  
 With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
 The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
 The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too ;  
 He cleft me thro' the stomacher ; and now  
 What think you of it, Florian ? do I chase  
 The substance or the shadow ? will it hold ?  
 I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
 No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I  
 Flatter myself that always everywhere  
 I know the substance when I see it. Well,  
 Are castles shadows ? Three of them ? Is  
     she  
 The sweet proprietress a shadow ? If not,  
 Shall those three castles patch my tat-  
     ter'd coat ?  
 For dear are those three castles to my  
     wants,  
 And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,

And two dear things are one of double  
     worth,  
 And much I might have said, but that  
     my zone  
 Unmann'd me : then the Doctors ! O to  
     hear  
 The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty  
     plants  
 Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to roar,  
 To break my chain, to shake my mane :  
     but thou,  
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry !  
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my  
     throat ;  
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet  
 Star-sisters answering under crescent  
     brows ;  
 Abate the stride, which speaks of man,  
     and loose  
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
 Where they like swallows coming out of  
     time  
 Will wonder why they came : but hark  
     the bell  
 For dinner, let us go ! "  
     And in we stream'd  
 Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
 With beauties every shade of brown and  
     fair  
 In colors gayer than the morning mist,  
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.  
 How might a man not wander from his  
     wits  
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept  
     mine own  
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,  
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compass'd with professors : they, the  
     while,  
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro :  
 A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost  
     terms  
 Of art and science : Lady Blanche alone  
 Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
 With all her autumn tresses falsely  
     brown,  
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
 In act to spring.  
     At last a solemn grace  
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens :  
     there  
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
 In this hand held a volume as to read,  
 And smoothed a petted peacock down  
     with that :  
 Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,

Or under arches of the marble bridge  
 Hung, shadow'd from the heat : some  
 hid and sought  
 In the orange thickets : others tost a  
 ball  
 Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
 With laughter : others lay about the  
 lawns,  
 Of the older sort, and murmur'd that  
 their May  
 Was passing : what was learning unto  
 them ?  
 They wish'd to marry ; they could rule  
 a house ;  
 Men hated learned women : but we three  
 Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often  
 came  
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
 That harm'd not : then day droopt ; the  
 chapel bells  
 Call'd us : we left the walks ; we mixt  
 with those  
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
 Before two streams of light from wall to  
 wall,  
 While the great organ almost burst his  
 pipes,  
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro'  
 the court  
 A long melodious thunder to the sound  
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
 The work of Ida, to call down from  
 Heaven  
 A blessing on her labors for the world.

---

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
 Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
 Wind of the western sea !  
 Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
 Blow him a dying to me ;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one,  
 sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
 Father will come to thee soon ;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
 Father will come to thee soon ;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon :  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty  
 one, sleep.

## III.

MORN in the white wake of the morning  
 star  
 Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
 Werose, and each by other drest with care  
 Descended to the courts that lay three parts  
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were  
 touch'd  
 Above the darkness from their native  
 East.

There while we stood beside the fount,  
 and watch'd  
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble,  
 approach'd  
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of  
 sleep,  
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes  
 The circled Iris of a night of tears ;  
 "And fly" she cried, "O fly, while yet  
 you may !  
 My mother knows" : and when I ask'd  
 her "how"  
 "My fault" she wept "my fault ! and  
 yet not mine ;  
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.  
 My mother, 't is her wont from night to  
 night  
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
 She says the Princess should have been  
 the Head,  
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;  
 And so it was agreed when first they came ;  
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used ;  
 Hers more than half the students, all  
 the love.  
 And so last night she fell to canvass you :  
 Her countrywomen ! she did not envy her.  
 'Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?  
 Girls ? — more like men !' and at these  
 words the snake,  
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast ;  
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my  
 cheek  
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye  
 To fix and make me hotter, till she  
 laugh'd :  
 'O marvellously modest maiden, you !  
 Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had  
 been men  
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric  
 thus  
 For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am  
 shamed  
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse



What looks so little graceful : 'men'  
(for still  
My mother went revolving on the word)  
'And so they are, — very like men in-  
deed —

And with that woman closeted for hours !'  
Then came these dreadful words out one  
by one,  
'Why — these — *are* — men' : I shud-  
der'd : 'and you know it.'  
'O ask me nothing,' I said : 'And she  
knows too,  
And she conceals it.' So my mother  
clutch'd

The truth at once, but with no word  
from me ;

And now thus early risen she goes to in-  
form

The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crush'd ;  
But you may yet be saved, and therefore  
fly :

But heal me with your pardon ere you go."

"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a  
blush ?"

Said Cyril : "Pale one, blush again :  
than wear

Those lilies, better blush our lives away.  
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in  
Heaven"

He added, "lest some classic Angel speak  
In scorn of us, 'they mounted, Gany-  
medes,

To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.'  
But I will melt this marble into wax  
To yield us farther furlough" : and he  
went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and  
thought

He scarce would prosper. "Tell us,"  
Florian ask'd,

"How grew this feud betwixt the right  
and left."

"O long ago," she said, "betwixt these  
two

Division smoulders hidden ; 'tis my  
mother,

Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with her :  
I never knew my father, but she says  
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool ;  
And still she rail'd against the state of  
things.

She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
And from the Queen's decease she brought  
her up.

But when your sister came she won the  
heart

Of Ida : they were still together, grew  
(For so they said themselves) inosculated ;  
Consonant chords that shiver to one note ;  
One mind in all things : yet my mother  
still

Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,  
And angled with them for her pupil's love :  
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not what :  
But I must go : I dare not tarry" and  
light,

As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after  
her.

"An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.  
If I could love, why this were she : how  
pretty

Her blushing was, and how she blush'd  
again,

As if to close with Cyril's random wish :  
Not like your Princess cramm'd with  
erring pride,  
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags  
in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of  
the crane,

The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.

My princess, O my princess ! true she  
errs,

But in her own grand way : being herself  
Three times more noble than threescore  
of men,

She sees herself in every woman else,  
And so she wears her error like a crown  
To blind the truth and me : for her, and  
her,

Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
The nectar ; but — ah she — when'er  
she moves

The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
A Memnon smitten with the morning  
Sun."

So saying from the court we paced,  
and gain'd

The terrace ranged along the Northern  
front,

And leaning there on those balusters, high  
Above the empurpled champaign, drank  
the gale

That blown about the foliage underneath,  
And sated with the innumerable rose,  
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came



Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he  
cried ;

"No fighting shadows here ! I forced a  
way

Thro' solid opposition crabbed and gnarled.  
Better to clear prime forests, heave and  
thump

A league of street in summer solstice down,  
Than hammer at this reverend gentle-  
woman.

I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd ; found  
her there

At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
The green malignant light of coming  
storm.

Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-  
oil'd,

As man's could be ; yet maiden-meeke I  
prayed

Concealment : she demanded who we were,  
And why we came ? I fabled nothing  
fair,

But, your example pilot, told her all.  
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and  
eye.

But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.  
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
And our three lives. True — we had  
limed ourselves

With open eyes, and we must take the  
chance.

But such extremes, I told her, well might  
harm

The woman's cause. 'Not more than  
now,' she said,

'So puddled as it is with favoritism.'  
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might  
befall

Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew :  
Her answer was 'Leave me to deal with  
that.'

I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
And duty duty, clear of consequences.

I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew  
No rock so hard but that a little wave  
May beat admission in a thousand years,  
I recommenced ; 'Decide not ere you  
pause.

I find you here but in the second place,  
Some say the third — the authentic found-  
ress you.

I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :  
Wink at our advent : help my prince to  
gain

His rightful bride, and here I promise you

Some palace in our land, where you shall  
reign

The head and heart of all our fair she-  
world,

And your great name flow on with broad-  
ening time

For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,  
And told me she would answer us to-day,  
Meantime be mute : thus much, nor  
more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the  
Head.

"That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
The dip of certain strata to the North.

Would we go with her ? we should find  
the land

Worth seeing ; and the river made a fall  
Out yonder" : then she pointed on to  
where

A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the  
vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all  
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
Then summon'd to the porch we went.

She stood

Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one  
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he  
roll'd

And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near ;  
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure  
came

Upon me, the weird vision of our house :  
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens, empty  
masks,

And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not. Yet  
I felt

My heart beat thick with passion and  
with awe ;

Then from my breast the involuntary sigh  
Broke, as she smote me with the light of  
eyes

That lent my knee desire to kneel, and  
shook

My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said :  
"O friend, we trust that you esteem'd  
us not

Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;  
Unwillingly we spake." "No — not to  
her,"

I answer'd, "but to one of whom we  
spake

Your Highness might have seem'd the  
thing you say."

"Again?" she cried, "are you ambassa-  
dresses

From him to me? we give you, being  
strange,

A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammer'd that I knew him — could  
have wish'd —

"Our king expects — was there no pre-  
contract?

There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but  
long'd

To follow: surely, if your Highness  
keep

Your purport, you will shock him ev'n  
to death,

Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy" she said "can he not read  
— no books?

Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals  
in that

Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,

Methinks he seems no better than a  
girl;

As girls were once, as we ourself have  
been:

We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt  
with them:

We touch on our dead self, nor shun to  
do it,

Being other — since we learnt our mean-  
ing here,

To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haugh-  
tier smile

"And as to precontracts, we move, my  
friend,

At no man's beck, but know ourself and  
thee,

O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out  
She kept her state, and left the drunken  
king

To brawl at Shushan underneath the  
palms."

"Alas your Highness breathes full  
East," I said,

"On that which leans to you. I know  
the Prince,

I prize his truth: and then how vast a  
work

To assail this gray pre-eminence of man!  
You grant me license; might I use it?  
think;

Ere half be done perchance your life may  
fail;

Then comes the feebler heiress of your  
plan,

And takes and ruins all; and thus your  
pains

May only make that footprint upon sand  
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice

Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that  
you,

With only Fame for spouse and your  
great deeds

For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
Meanwhile, what every woman counts

her due,  
Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaim'd,

"Peace, you young savage of the North-  
ern wild!

What! tho' your Prince's love were like  
a God's,

Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?  
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd

to thus:  
Yet will we say for children, would they

grew  
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like

them well:  
But children die; and let me tell you,

girl,  
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot

die;  
They with the sun and moon renew their

light  
Forever, blessing those that look on them.

Children — that men may pluck them  
from our hearts,

Kill us with pity, break us with our-  
selves —

O — children — there is nothing upon  
earth

More miserable than she that has a son  
And sees him err: nor would we work

for fame;  
Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause

of Great,  
Who learns the one *POU STO* whence

after-hands

May move the world, tho' she herself  
 effect  
 But little : wherefore up and act, nor  
 shrink  
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we  
 had been,  
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
 Of giants living, each, a thousand years,  
 That we might see our own work out, and  
 watch  
 The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in my-  
 self  
 If that strange Poet-princess with her  
 grand  
 Imaginations might at all be won.  
 And she broke out interpreting my  
 thoughts :

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster  
 to you ;  
 We are used to that : for women, up till  
 this  
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle  
 taboo,  
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
 In high desire, they know not, cannot  
 guess  
 How much their welfare is a passion  
 to us.  
 If we could give them surer, quicker  
 proof —  
 Oh if our end were less achievable  
 By slow approaches, than by single act  
 Of immolation, any phase of death,  
 We were as prompt to spring against the  
 pikes,  
 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
 To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;  
 And up we came to where the river sloped  
 To plunge in cataract, shattering on black  
 blocks  
 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the  
 woods,  
 And danced the color, and, below, stuck  
 out  
 The bones of some vast bulk that lived  
 and roar'd  
 Before man was. She gazed awhile and  
 said,  
 "As these rude bones to us, are we to her  
 That will be." "Dare we dream of  
 that," I ask'd,

"Which wrought us, as the workman  
 and his work,  
 That practice better?" "How," she  
 cried, "you love  
 The metaphysics ! read and earn our prize,  
 A golden brooch : beneath an emerald  
 plane  
 Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
 Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought to the  
 life ;  
 She rapt upon her subject, he on her :  
 For there are schools for all." "And  
 yet" I said  
 "Methinks I have not found among them  
 all  
 One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of  
 that,"  
 She answer'd, "but it pleased us not :  
 in truth  
 We shudder but to dream our maids  
 should ape  
 Those monstrous males that carve the  
 living hound,  
 And cram him with the fragments of the  
 grave,  
 Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shame-  
 ful jest,  
 Encarnalize their spirits : yet we know  
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter  
 hangs :  
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
 Nor willing men should come among us,  
 learnt,  
 For many weary moons before we came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you sick,  
 ourself  
 Would tend upon you. To your question  
 now,  
 Which touches on the workman and his  
 work.  
 Let there be light and there was light :  
 't is so :  
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is ;  
 And all creation is one act at once,  
 The birth of light : but we that are not  
 all,  
 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now  
 that,  
 And live, perforce, from thought to  
 thought, and make  
 One act a phantom of succession : thus  
 Our weakness somehow shapes the  
 shadow, Time ;  
 But in the shadow will we work, and mould  
 The woman to the fuller day."





"The splendor falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story."

With kindled eyes : we rode a league be-  
yond,  
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing,  
came

On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
Full of all beauty. "O how sweet" I said  
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)  
"To linger here with one that loved us."  
"Yea"

She answer'd "or with fair philosophies  
That lift the fancy ; for indeed these fields  
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,  
Where paced the Demigods of old, and  
saw  
The soft white vapor streak the crowned  
towers

Built to the Sun" : then, turning to her  
maids,

"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward ;  
Lay out the viands." At the word, they  
raised

A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
With fair Corinna's triumph ; here she  
stood,

Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
The woman - conqueror ; woman - con-  
quer'd there

The bearded Victor of ten - thousand  
hymns,

And all the men mourn'd at his side :  
but we

Set forth to climb ; then, elimbing, Cyril  
kept



With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
 With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the  
     rocks,  
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
 In the dark crag : and then we turn'd,  
     we wound  
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
 Hammering and clinking, chattering  
     stony names  
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap  
     and tuff,  
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
 Grew broader toward his death and fell,  
     and all  
 The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendor falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story :  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes  
     flying,  
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dy-  
     ing, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,  
 And thinner, clearer, farther going !  
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !  
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :  
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dy-  
     ing, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
 They faint on hill or field or river :  
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
 And grow for ever and for ever.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes  
     flying,  
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dy-  
     ing, dying.

## IV.

"THERE sinks the nebulous star we call  
     the Sun,  
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound"  
 Said Ida ; "let us down and rest" ; and  
     we  
 Down from the lean and wrinkled preci-  
     pices,  
 By every coppice-feather'd chasm and  
     cleft,

Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where  
     below  
 No bigger than a glow-worm shone the  
     tent  
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd  
     on me,  
 Descending ; once or twice she lent her  
     hand,  
 And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt  
 Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
 There leaning deep in broider'd down we  
     sank  
 Our elbows : on a tripod in the midst  
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and  
     gold.

Then she "Let some one sing to us :  
     lightlier move  
 The minutes fledged with music" : and  
     a maid,  
 Of those beside her, smote her harp, and  
     sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what  
     they mean,  
 Tears from the depth of some divine de-  
     spair  
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
 In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on  
     a sail,  
 That brings our friends up from the un-  
     derworld,  
 Sad as the last which reddens over one  
 That sinks with all we love below the  
     verge ;  
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark sum-  
     mer dawns  
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering  
     square ;  
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no  
     more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy  
     feign'd  
 On lips that are for others ; deep as love,



' In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.'

Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that the tear,  
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl  
Lost in her bosom : but with some disdain  
Answer'd the Princess "If indeed there haunt  
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears  
with wool

And so pace by : but thine are fancies hatch'd  
In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,  
While down the streams that float us  
each and all  
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs  
of ice,  
Throne after throne, and molten on the  
waste  
Becomes a cloud : for all things serve  
their time  
Toward that great year of equal might  
and rights,  
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end  
Found golden : let the past be past ; let be

Their cancell'd Babels : tho' the rough  
kex break

The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown  
goat

Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig trees split  
Their monstrous idols, care not while we  
hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns  
Above the unrisen morrow" : then to me ;  
" Know you no song of your own land,"  
she said,

" Not such as moans about the retrospect,  
But deals with the other distance and  
the hues

Of promise ; not a death's-head at the  
wine."

Then I remember'd one myself had  
made,

What time I watch'd the swallow wing-  
ing south

From mine own land, part made long  
since, and part

Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far  
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

" O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying  
South,

Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

" O tell her, Swallow, thou that know-  
est each,

That bright and fierce and fickle is the  
South,

And dark and true and tender is the North.

" O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow,  
and light

Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million  
loves.

" O were I thou that she might take  
me in,

And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

" Why lingereth she to clothe her heart  
with love,

Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are  
green ?

" O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood  
is flown :

Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is  
made.

" O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

" O Swallow, flying from the golden  
woods,

Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and  
make her mine,

And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with  
alien lips,

And knew not what they meant ; for  
still my voice

Rang false : but smiling " Not for thee,"  
she said,

" O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,

rather, maid,  
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-  
crake

Grate her harsh kindred in the grass :  
and this

A mere love-poem ! O for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight : they mind us of  
the time

When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves  
are men,

That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up.

And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.

Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor once ;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her. She  
is dead.

So they blaspheme the muse ! but great  
is song

Used to great ends : ourself have often  
tried

Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have  
dash'd

The passion of the prophetess ; for song  
Is due unto freedom, force and growth

Of spirit than to junketing and love.  
Love is it ? Would this same mock-love,

and this  
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter  
bats,

Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,



Not vassals to be beat, nor petty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and  
    sphered  
Whole in ourselves and owed to none.  
    Enough !  
But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
Know you no song, the true growth of  
    your soil,  
That gives the manners of your country-  
    women ? ”

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous  
    head with eyes  
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such  
    a song,

Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass  
    had wrought,  
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at  
    him,

I frowning ; Psyche flush'd and wann'd  
    and shook ;

The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows ;  
“ Forbear ” the Princess cried ; “ For-  
    bear, Sir ” I ;

And heated thro' and thro' with wrath  
    and love,

I smote him on the breast ; he started up ;  
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd ;  
Melissa clamor'd “ Flee the death ” ;  
    “ To horse ”

Said Ida ; “ home ! to horse ! ” and fled,  
    as flies

A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,  
When some one batters at the dovecote-  
    doors,

Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at  
    heart,

In the pavilion : there like parting hopes  
I heard them passing from me : hoof by  
    hoof,

And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
Clang'd on the bridge ; and then another  
    shriek,

“ The Head, the Head, the Princess, O  
    the Head ! ”

For blind with rage she miss'd the plank,  
    and roll'd

In the river. Out I sprang from glow to  
    gloom :

There whirl'd her white robe like a blos-  
    som'd branch

Rapt to the horrible fall : a glance I gave,

No more ; but woman-vested as I was  
Plunged ; and the flood drew ; yet I  
    caught her ; then

Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
The weight of all the hopes of half the  
    world,

Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
Was half-disrooted from his place and  
    stoop'd

To drench his dark locks in the gurgling  
    wave

Mid-channel. Right on this we drove  
    and caught,

And grasping down the boughs I gain'd  
    the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly  
    group'd

In the hollow bank. One reaching for-  
    ward drew

My burden from mine arms ; they cried  
    “ she lives ” :

They bore her back into the tent : but I,  
So much a kind of shame within me  
    wrought,

Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
Nor found my friends ; but push'd alone  
    on foot

(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)  
Across the woods, and less from Indian  
    craft

Than beelike instinct hiveward, found  
    at length

The garden portals. Two great statues,  
    Art

And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were  
    valves

Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his  
    brows

Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the  
    gates.

A little space was left between the horns,  
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with  
    pain,

Dropt on the sward, and up the linden  
    walks,

And, tost on thoughts that changed from  
    hue to hue,

Now poring on the glowworm, now the  
    star,

I paced the terrace, till the Bear had  
    wheel'd

Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.



A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain  
gloom,

Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this  
were she"

But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist," he  
said,

"They seek us : out so late is out of rules.  
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry.  
How came you here?" I told him : "I"  
said he,

"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart,  
return'd.

Arriving all confused among the rest  
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, under-  
neath

The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial : each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us : last of all,  
Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at  
first

Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied :  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar  
with her,

Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there ; she  
call'd

For Psyche's child to cast it from the  
doors ;

She sent for Blanche to accuse her face  
to face ;

And I slept out : but whither will you now ?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled :  
What, if together ? that were not so well.  
Would rather we had never come ! I dread  
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him  
more than I

That struck him : this is proper to the  
clown,

Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled,  
still the clown,

To harm the thing that trusts him, and  
to shame

That which he says he loves : for Cyril,  
howe'er

He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song  
Might have been worse and sinn'd in  
grosser lips

Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold

These flashes on the surface are not he.  
He has a solid base of temperament :  
But as the waterlily starts and slides  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind  
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a tam-  
arisk near

Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,  
"Names" :

He, standing still, was clutch'd ; but I  
began

To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind  
And double in and out the boles, and race  
By all the fountains : fleet I was of foot :  
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes ;  
behind

I heard the puff'd pursuer ; at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,  
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.  
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,  
That clasp'd the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught and  
known.

They haled us to the Princess where  
she sat

High in the hall : above her droop'd a  
lamp,

And made the single jewel on her brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,  
Prophet of storm : a handmaid on each side  
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long  
black hair

Damp from the river ; and close behind  
her stood

Eight daughters of the plough, stronger  
than men,

Huge women blowz'd with health, and  
wind, and rain,

And labor. Each was like a Druid rock ;  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about  
with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing  
clove

An advent to the throne : and there beside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from  
wrong,

Her round white shoulder shaken with  
her sobs,

Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

"It was not thus, O Princess, in old  
 days :  
 You prized my counsel, lived upon my  
 lips :  
 I led you then to all the Castalies ;  
 I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;  
 I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
 Your second mother : those were gracious  
 times.  
 Then came your new friend : you began  
 to change —  
 I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to  
 cool ;  
 Till taken with her seeming openness  
 You turn'd your warmer currents all to  
 her,  
 To me you froze : this was my meed for  
 all.  
 Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
 And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
 And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
 And partly that you were my civil head,  
 And chiefly you were born for something  
 great,  
 In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
 When time should serve ; and thus a  
 noble scheme  
 Grew up from seed we two long since  
 had sown ;  
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun :  
 We took this palace ; but even from the  
 first  
 You stood in your own light and darken'd  
 mine.  
 What student came but that you planed  
 her path  
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
 A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
 I your old friend and tried, she new in  
 all ?  
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine  
 were lean ;  
 Yet I bore up in hopes she would be known :  
 Then came these wolves : *they* knew her :  
*they* endured,  
 Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
 To tell her what they were, and she to  
 hear :  
 And me none told : not less to an eye  
 like mine,  
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
 Last night, their mask was patent, and  
 my foot  
 Was to you : but I thought again : I fear'd  
 To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall  
 hear of it  
 From Lady Psyche' : you had gone to  
 her,  
 She told, perforce ; and winning easy  
 grace,  
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd  
 among us  
 In our young nursery still unknown, the  
 stem  
 Less grain than touchwood, while my  
 honest heat.  
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste  
 To push my rival out of place and power.  
 But public use required she should be  
 known ;  
 And since my oath was ta'en for public  
 use,  
 I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd  
 them well,  
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief  
 done ;  
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate  
 me for it)  
 I came to tell you ; found that you had  
 gone,  
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now, I  
 thought,  
 That surely she will speak ; if not, then I :  
 Did she ? These monsters blazon'd what  
 they were,  
 According to the coarseness of their kind,  
 For thus I hear ; and known at last (my  
 work)  
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame,  
 I grant in her some sense of shame, she  
 flies ;  
 And I remain on whom to wreak your  
 rage,  
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
 I that have wasted here health, wealth,  
 and time,  
 And talents, I — you know it — I will  
 not boast :  
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff  
 For every gust of chance, and men will say  
 We did not know the real light, but chased  
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can  
 tread."

She ceased : the Princess answer'd  
 coldly " Good :  
 Your oath is broken : we dismiss you : go.  
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the  
 child)  
 Our mind is changed : we take it to our-  
 self."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture  
throat,  
And shot from crooked lips a haggard  
smile.

"The plan was mine. I built the nest"  
she said

"To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and  
stoop'd to updrag

Melissa : she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face,  
and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven ; and  
while

We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face,  
and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
Delivering seal'd despatches which the  
Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood  
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful  
bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
When the wild peasant rights himself,  
the rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the  
heavens ;

For anger most it seem'd, while now her  
breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her  
heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she  
held

Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet  
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;  
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire ; she  
crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should  
say

"Read," and I read — two letters — one  
her sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the  
Prince your way  
We knew not your ungracious laws,  
which learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are  
built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but  
fell

Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
You lying close upon his territory,  
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
And here he keeps me hostage for his  
son."

The second was my father's running  
thus :

"You have our son : touch not a hair of  
his head :

Render him up unscathed : give him your  
hand :

Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we  
hear

You hold the woman is the better man ;  
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
Would make all women kick against  
their Lords

Thro' all the world, and which might  
well deserve

That we this night should pluck your  
palace down ;

And we will do it, unless you send us back  
Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read ;  
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

"O not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
But led by golden wishes, and a hope  
The child of regal compact, did I break  
Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex  
But venerator, zealous it should be  
All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,  
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your  
wrongs,

From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life  
Less mine than yours : my nurse would  
tell me of you ;

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
Vague brightness ; when a boy, you  
stoop'd to me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost  
south

And blown to inmost north ; at eve and  
dawn

With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;  
The leader wildswan in among the stars  
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of  
glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,  
Because I would have reach'd you, had  
you been

Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned  
 Persephone in Hades, now at length,  
 Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
 A man I came to see you : but, indeed,  
 Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,  
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait  
 On you, their centre : let me say but this,  
 That many a famous man and woman, town  
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
 The dwarfs of presage ; tho' when known, there grew  
 Another kind of beauty in detail  
 Made them worth knowing : but in you I found  
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down  
 And master'd, while that after-beauty makes  
 Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,  
 Within me, that except you slay me here,  
 According to your bitter statute-book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
 The seal does music ; who desire you more  
 Than growing boys their manhood ; dying lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to do,  
 The breath of life ; O more than poor men wealth,  
 Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but half  
 Without you ; with you, whole ; and of those halves  
 You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar  
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold  
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
 To follow up the worthiest till he die :  
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
 Behold your father's letter."

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd

Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of fierce  
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
 As waits a river level with the dam  
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :

And so she would have spoken, but there rose

A hubbub in the court of half the maids

Gather'd together : from the illumined hall

Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press  
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,  
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,

And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro

Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,

All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
 Some crying there was an army in the land,

And some that men were in the very walls,  
 And some they cared not ; till a clamor grew

As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
 And worse-confounded : high above them stood

The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head : but rising up

Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so  
 To the open window moved, remaining there

Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light

Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd

Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

"What fear ye brawlers ? am not I your Head ?

On me, me, me, the storm first breaks : I dare

All these male thunderbolts : what is it ye fear ?

Peace ! there are those to avenge us and they come :

If not, — myself were like enough, O girls,  
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,

Die : yet I blame you not so much for fear ;  
 Six thousand years of fear have made you that

From which I would redeem you ; but for those

That stir this hubbub — you and you — I know

Your faces there in the crowd — to-morrow morn

We hold a great convention : then shall they



That love their voices more than duty,  
 learn  
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame  
 to live  
 No wiser than their mothers, household  
 stuff,  
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,  
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the  
 clown,  
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks  
 of Time,  
 Whose brains are in their hands and in  
 their heels,  
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to  
 thrum,  
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to  
 scour,  
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat  
 the crowd  
 Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile,  
 that look'd  
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure  
 gloom  
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and  
 said :

"You have done well and like a gen-  
 tleman,  
 And like a prince : you have our thanks  
 for all :  
 And you look well too in your woman's  
 dress :  
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.  
 You saved our life : we owe you bitter  
 thanks :  
 Better have died and spilt our bones in  
 the flood —  
 Then men had said — but now — What  
 hinders me  
 To take such bloody vengeance on you  
 both ? —  
 Yet since our father — Wasps in our good  
 hive,  
 You would be quenchers of the light to be,  
 Barbarians, grosser than your native  
 bears —  
 O would I had his sceptre for one hour !  
 You that have dared to break our bound,  
 and gull'd  
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and  
 thwarted us —  
 I wed with thee ! I bound by precontract  
 Your bride, your bonds slave ! not tho' all  
 the gold

That veins the world were pack'd to make  
 your crown,  
 And every spoken tongue should lord  
 you. Sir,  
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful  
 to us :

I trample on your offers and on you :  
 Begone : we will not look upon you more.  
 Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.  
 Then those eight mighty daughters of  
 the plough  
 Bent their broad faces toward us and  
 address'd  
 Their motion : twice I sought to plead  
 my cause,  
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy  
 hands,  
 The weight of destiny : so from her face  
 They push'd us, down the steps, and  
 thro' the court,  
 And with grim laughter thrust us out at  
 gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty  
 mound  
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and  
 heard  
 The voices murmuring. While I listen'd,  
 came  
 On a sudden the weird seizure and the  
 doubt :  
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts ;  
 The Princess with her monstrous woman-  
 guard,  
 The jest and earnest working side by side,  
 The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
 Were shadows ; and the long fantastic  
 night  
 With all its doings had and had not been,  
 And all things were and were not.

This went by  
 As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;  
 Not long ; I shook it off ; for spite of  
 doubts  
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
 To whom the touch of all mischance but  
 came  
 As night to him that sitting on a hill  
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway  
 sun  
 Set into sunrise ; then we moved away.

---

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,  
 That beat to battle where he stands ;

Thy face across his fancy comes,  
 And gives the battle to his hands :  
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
 He sees his brood about thy knee ;  
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-  
 possess'd,  
 She struck such warbling fury thro' the  
 words ;  
 And, after, feigning pique at what she  
 call'd  
 The railery, or grotesque, or false sub-  
 lime—  
 Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
 The music—clapt her hands and cried  
 for war,  
 Or some grand fight to kill and make an  
 end :

And he that next inherited the tale  
 Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
 "Sir Ralph has got your colors : if I  
 prove  
 Your knight, and fight your battle, what  
 for me ?"

It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb  
 Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
 She took it and she flung it. "Fight"  
 she said,  
 "And make us all we would be, great  
 and good."

He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
 Arranged the favor, and assumed the  
 Prince.

## V.

Now, scarce three paces measured from  
 the mound,  
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
 And "Stand, who goes ?" "Two from  
 the palace" I.

"The second two : they wait," he said,  
 "pass on ;  
 His Highness wakes" : and one, that  
 clash'd in arms,  
 By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas,  
 led

Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake  
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
 Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light  
 Dazed me half-blind : I stood and seem'd  
 to hear,

As in a poplar grove when a light wind  
 wakes  
 A lisp of the innumerable leaf and  
 dies,  
 Each hissing in his neighbor's ear ; and  
 then  
 A strangled titter, out of which there  
 brake  
 On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,  
 Unmeasured mirth ; while now the two  
 old kings  
 Began to wag their baldness up and down,  
 The fresh young captains flash'd their  
 glittering teeth,  
 The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved  
 and blew,  
 And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded  
 Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek  
 wet with tears,  
 Panted from weary sides "King, you are  
 free !

We did but keep you surety for our son,  
 If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin,  
 thou,

That tends her bristled grunterns in the  
 sludge" :

For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn  
 with briars,

More crumpled than a poppy from the  
 sheath,

And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to  
 heel.

Then some one sent beneath his vaulted  
 palm

A whisper'd jest to some one near him  
 "Look,

He has been among his shadows." "Sa-  
 tan take

The old women and their shadows ! (thus  
 the King

Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with  
 men.

Go : Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink  
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
 From what was left of faded woman-slough  
 To sheathing splendors and the golden  
 scale

Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the  
 Earth,

And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril  
 met us,

A little shy at first, but by and by

We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and  
given

For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,  
whereon

Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away  
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
Had come on Psyche weeping: "then we  
fell

Into your father's hand, and there she lies,  
But will not speak, nor stir."

He show'd a tent  
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there  
Among piled arms and rough accoutre-  
ments,

Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
Like some sweet sculpture draped from  
head to foot,

And push'd by rude hands from its ped-  
estal,

All her fair length upon the ground she lay:  
And at her head a follower of the camp,  
A char'd and wrinkled piece of woman-  
hood,

Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come" he  
whisper'd to her,

"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not  
thus.

What have you done but right? you  
could not slay

Me, nor your prince: look up: be com-  
forted:

Sweet is it to have done the thing one  
ought,

When fall'n in darker ways." And like-  
wise I:

"Be comforted: have I not lost her too,  
In whose least act abides the nameless  
charm

That none has else for me?" She heard,  
she moved,

She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she  
sat,

And raised the cloak from brows as pale  
and smooth

As those that mourn half-shrouded over  
death

In deathless marble. "Her" she said  
"my friend—

Parted from her—betray'd her cause and  
mine—

Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not  
your faith?

O base and bad! what comfort? none for  
me!"

To whom remorseful Cyril "Yet I pray

Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your  
child!"

At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah my  
child,

My one sweet child, whom I shall see no  
more!

For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
And either she will die from want of care,  
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
The child is hers—for every little fault,  
The child is hers; and they will beat my  
girl

Remembering her mother: O my flower!  
Or they will take her, they will make  
her hard,

And she will pass me by in after-life  
With some cold reverence worse than  
were she dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
To lag behind, scared by the cry they  
made,

The horror of the shame among them all:  
But I will go and sit beside the doors,

And make a wild petition night and day,  
Until they hate to hear me like a wind

Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
And lay my little blossom at my feet,

My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child:  
And I will take her up and go my way,

And satisfy my soul with kissing her:  
Ah! what might that man not deserve

of me,

Who gave me back my child?" "Be  
comforted"

Said Cyril "you shall have it": but again  
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank,

and so

Like tender things that being caught  
feign death,

Spoke not, nor stir'd.

By this a murmur ran  
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the  
scouts

With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
We left her by the woman, and without

Found the gray kings at parle: and  
"Look you" cried

My father "that our compact be fulfill'd:  
You have spoilt this child; she laughs

at you and man:  
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and  
him:

But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;  
She yields, or war."

Then Gama turn'd to me:

“We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time  
With our strange girl : and yet they say  
that still

You love her. Give us, then, your mind  
at large :

How say you, war or not ?”

“Not war, if possible,  
O king,” I said, “lest from the abuse of  
war,

The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
The smouldering homestead, and the  
household flower

Torn from the lintel — all the common  
wrong —

A smoke go up thro’ which I loom to her  
Three times a monster : now she lightens  
scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then  
would hate

(And every voice she talk’d with ratify it,  
And every face she look’d on justify it)  
The general foe. More soluble is this knot,  
By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
What were I nigher this altho’ we dash’d  
Your cities into shards with catapults,  
She would not love ; — or brought her  
chain’d, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
Not ever would she love ; but brooding  
turn

The book of scorn, till all my fitting chance  
Were caught within the record of her  
wrongs,

And crush’d to death : and rather, Sire,  
than this

I would the old God of war himself were  
dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of  
wreck,

Or like an old-world mammoth bulk’d  
in ice,

Not to be molten out.”

And roughly spake  
My father, “Tut, you know them not,  
the girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir !  
Man is the hunter ; woman is his game :  
The sleek and shining creatures of the  
chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;  
They love us for it, and we ride them down.  
Wheeling and siding with them ! Out !  
for shame !

Boy, there’s no rose that’s half so dear  
to them

As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
Breathing and sounding a beautiful battle,  
comes

With the air of the trumpet round him,  
and leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the  
score

Flatter’d and fluster’d, wins, tho’ dash’d  
with death

He reddens what he kisses : thus I won  
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
Worth winning ; but this firebrand —  
gentleness

To such as her ! if Cyril spake her true,  
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
Were wisdom to it.”

“Yea but Sire,” I cried,  
“Wild natures need wise curbs. The  
soldier ? No :

What dares not Ida do that she should  
prize

The soldier ? I beheld her, when she rose  
The yesternight, and storming in extremes  
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance  
down

Gagelike to man, and had not shunn’d  
the death,

No, not the soldier’s : yet I hold her, king,  
True woman : but you clash them all in  
one,

That have as many differences as we.  
The violet varies from the lily as far  
As oak from elm : one loves the soldier,  
one

The silken priest of peace, one this, one  
that,

And some unworthily ; their sinless faith,  
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
Glorifying clown and satyr ; whence they  
need

More breadth of culture : is not Ida right ?  
They worth it ? truer to the law within ?  
Severer in the logic of a life ?

Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
Of earth and heaven ? and she of whom  
you speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
Creation minted in the golden moods  
Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a  
touch,

But pure as lines of green that streak the  
white

Of the first snowdrop’s inner leaves ; I say,  
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual  
mire,



But whole and one : and take them all-  
in-all,  
Were we ourselves but half as good, as  
kind,  
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly  
theirs  
As dues of Nature. To our point : not  
war :  
Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense"  
Said Gama. "We remember love our-  
self

In our sweet youth ; we did not rate him  
then

This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
You talk almost like Ida : *she* can talk ;  
And there is something in it as you say :  
But you talk kindlier : we esteem you  
for it. —

He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
I would he had our daughter : for the rest,  
Our own detention, why, the causes  
weigh'd,

Fatherly fears — you used us courteous-  
ly —

We would do much to gratify your  
Prince —

We pardon it ; and for your ingress here  
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,  
You did but come as goblins in the night,  
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's  
head,

Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the  
milking-maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream :  
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
He comes back safe) ride with us to our  
lines,

And speak with Arac : Arac's word is  
thrice

As ours with Ida : something may be  
done —

I know not what — and ours shall see us  
friends.

You, likewise, our late guests, if so you  
will,

Follow us : who knows ? we four may  
build some plan

Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd.  
White hands of farewell to my sire, who  
growl'd

An answer which, half-muffled in his  
beard,

Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across  
the lawns

Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of  
Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray  
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and  
woke

Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
In the old king's ears, who promised help,  
and oozed

All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode ;  
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews  
Gather'd by night and peace, with each  
light air

On our mail'd heads : but other thoughts  
than Peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled  
squares,

And squadrons of the Prince, trampling  
the flowers

With clamor : for among them rose a cry  
As if to greet the king ; they made a halt ;  
The horses yell'd ; they clash'd their  
arms ; the drum

Beat ; merrily-blowing shrill'd the mar-  
tial fife ;

And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner : anon to meet us lightly  
pranced

Three captains out ; nor ever had I seen  
Such thews of men : the midmost and the  
highest

Was Arac : all about his motion clung  
The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made  
them glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's  
zone,

That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark ;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as  
they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I  
heard

War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of  
force,

Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
Stir in me as to strike : then took the king  
His three broad sons ; with now a wan-  
dering hand

And now a pointed finger, told them all :  
A common light of smiles at our disguise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy  
jest

Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,  
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in  
words.

“Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he  
himself

Your captive, yet my father wills not war :  
And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war  
or no ?

But then this question of your troth re-  
mains :

And there's a downright honest mean-  
ing in her ;

She flies too high, she flies too high ! and  
yet

She ask'd but space and fairplay for her  
scheme ;

She prest and prest it on me — I myself,  
What know I of these things ? but, life  
and soul !

I thought her half-right talking of her  
wrongs ;

I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what  
of that ?

I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong,  
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those  
she loves,

And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,  
I stand upon her side : she made me  
swear it —

'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by can-  
dle-light —

Swear by St. something — I forget her  
name —

Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men ;  
*She* was a princess too ; and so I swore.

Come, this is all ; she will not : waive  
your claim :

If not, the foughten field, what else, at  
once

Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's  
will.”

I lagg'd in answer loath to render up  
My precontract, and loath by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper  
yet ;

Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat “Like to like !  
The woman's garment hid the woman's  
heart.”

A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a  
blow !

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,

And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the  
point

Where idle boys are cowards to their  
shame,

“Decide it here : why not ? we are three  
to three.”

Then spake the third “But three to  
three ? no more ?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause ?  
More, more, for honor : every captain  
waits

Hungry for honor, angry for his king.  
More, more, some fifty on a side, that  
each

May breathe himself, and quick ! by  
overthrow

Of these or those, the question settled die.”

“Yea” answer'd I “for this wild  
wreath of air,

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men's deeds — this honor, if ye  
will.

It needs must be for honor if at all :  
Since, what decision ? if we fail, we fail,

And if we win, we fail : she would not  
keep

Her compact.” “'Sdeath ! but we will  
send to her,”

Said Arac, “worthy reasons why she  
should

Bide by this issue : let our missive thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the  
word.”

“Boys !” shriek'd the old king, but  
vainlier than a hen

To her false daughters in the pool ; for  
none

Regarded ; neither seem'd there more to  
say :

Back rode we to my father's camp, and  
found

He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if *Ida* yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life : three times  
he went :

The first, he blew and blew, but none  
appear'd :

He batter'd at the doors ; none came :  
the next,

An awful voice within had warn'd him  
thence :

The third, and those eight daughters of  
the plough

Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught  
 his hair,  
 And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek  
 They made him wild : not less one glance  
 he caught  
 Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
 Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
 Tho' compass'd by two armies and the  
 noise  
 Of arms ; and standing like a stately Pine  
 Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
 When storm is on the heights, and right  
 and left  
 Suck'd from the dark heart of the long  
 hills roll  
 The torrents, dash'd to the vale : and yet  
 her will  
 Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was  
 pledged  
 To fight in tourney for my bride, he  
 clash'd  
 His iron palms together with a cry ;  
 Himself would tilt it out among the lads :  
 But overborne by all his bearded lords  
 With reasons drawn from age and state,  
 perforce  
 He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce  
 demur :  
 And many a bold knight started up in  
 heat,  
 And sware to combat for my claim till  
 death.

All on this side the palace ran the field  
 Flat to the garden-wall : and likewise  
 here,  
 Above the garden's glowing blossom-  
 belts,  
 A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
 And great bronze valves, emboss'd with  
 Tomyris  
 And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
 But now fast barr'd : so here upon the flat  
 All that long morn the lists were ham-  
 mer'd up,  
 And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
 With message and defiance, went and  
 came ;  
 Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
 But shaken here and there, and rolling  
 words  
 Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

"O brother, you have known the pangs  
 we felt,

What heats of indignation when we heard  
 Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's  
 feet ;  
 Of lands in which at the altar the poor  
 bride  
 Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a  
 scourge ;  
 Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
 Where smoulder their dead despots ; and  
 of those, —  
 Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity, fling  
 Their pretty maids in the running flood,  
 and swoops  
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
 Made for all noble motion : and I saw  
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
 With smother men : the old leaven  
 leaven'd all :  
 Millions of throats would bawl for civil  
 rights,  
 No woman named : therefore I set my  
 face  
 Against all men, and lived but for mine  
 own.  
 Far off from men I built a fold for them :  
 I stored it full of rich memorial :  
 I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,  
 And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy boys  
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd  
 our peace,  
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know  
 not what  
 Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
 Seal'd not the bond — the striplings ! —  
 for their sport ! —  
 I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame  
 these ?  
 Or you ? or I ? for since you think me  
 touch'd  
 In honor — what, I would not aught of  
 false —  
 Is not our cause pure ? and whereas I know  
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's  
 blood  
 You draw from, fight ; you failing, I abide  
 What end soever : fail you will not. Still  
 Take not his life : he risk'd it for my own ;  
 His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,  
 Fight and fight well ; strike and strike  
 home. O dear  
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you,  
 you  
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the after-  
 time,

Your very armor hallow'd, and your  
statues  
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd  
aside,  
We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
And mould a generation strong to move  
With claim on claim from right to right,  
till she  
Whose name is yoked with children's,  
know herself;  
And Knowledge in our own land make  
her free,  
And, ever following those two crowned  
twins,  
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery  
grain  
Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
Between the Northern and the Southern  
morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across  
the rest.  
"See that there be no traitors in your  
camp:  
We seem a nest of traitors — none to  
trust  
Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-  
plague of men!  
Almost our maids were better at their  
homes,  
Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I  
think  
Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :  
She shall not have it back : the child  
shall grow  
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
This morning : there the tender orphan  
hands  
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm  
from thence  
The wrath I nursed against the world :  
farewell."

I ceased ; he said : "Stubborn, but  
she may sit  
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-  
storms,  
And breed up warriors ! See now, tho'  
yourself  
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
That swallow common sense, the spin-  
dling king,  
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
When the man wants weight, the wo-  
man takes it up,

And topples down the scales ; but this  
is fixt  
As are the roots of earth and base of all,  
Man for the field and woman for the hearth :  
Man for the sword and for the needle  
she :  
Man with the head and woman with the  
heart :  
Man to command and woman to obey ;  
All else confusion. Look you ! the gray  
mare  
Is ill to live with, when her whinnys shrills  
From tile to scullery, and her small good-  
man  
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires  
of Hell  
Mix with his hearth : but you — she's  
yet a colt —  
Take, break her : strongly groom'd and  
straitly curb'd  
She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the bantling scald at home, and  
brawl  
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in  
the street.  
They say she's comely ; there's the fairer  
chance :  
I like her none the less for rating at her !  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame. A lusty  
brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king :  
I took my leave, for it was nearly noon :  
I pored upon her letter which I held,  
And on the little clause "take not his  
life" :  
I mused on that wild morning in the  
woods,  
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt  
win" :  
I thought on all the wrathful king had  
said,  
And how the strange betrothment was  
to end :  
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's  
curse  
That one should fight with shadows and  
should fall ;  
And like a flash the weird affection came :  
King, camp, and college turn'd to hollow  
shows ;  
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
To dream myself the shadow of a dream :



And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and  
plumed

We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again : at which the  
storm

Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of  
spears

And riders front to front, until they closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering  
points,

And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,  
I dream'd

Of fighting. On his haunches rose the  
steed,

And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the  
fire.

Part sat like rocks : part reel'd but kept  
their seats :

Part roll'd on the earth and rose again  
and drew :

Part stumbled mixt with floundering  
horses. Down

From those two bulks at Arac's side, and  
down

From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
The large blows rain'd, as here and every-  
where

He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing  
lists,

And all the plain,—brand, mace, and  
shaft, and shield—

Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd  
With hammers ; till I thought, can this  
be he

From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be  
so,

The mother makes us most — and in my  
dream

I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'  
eyes,

And highest, among the statues, statue-  
like,

Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
A single band of gold about her hair,  
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven : but  
she

No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—  
Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me fight,  
Yea, let her see me fall ! with that I  
drave

Among the thickest and bore down a  
Prince,

And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my  
dream

All that I would. But that large-mould-  
ed man,

His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
Made at me thro' the press, and, stagger-  
ing back

With stroke on stroke the horse and  
horseman, came

As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the  
drains,

And shadowing down the champaign till  
it strikes

On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and  
cracks, and splits,

And twists the grain with such a roar  
that Earth

Reels, and the herdsmen cry ; for every-  
thing

Gave way before him : only Florian, he  
That loved me closer than his own right  
eye,

Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him  
down :

And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the  
Prince,

With Psyche's color round his helmet,  
tough,

Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at  
arms ;

But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that  
smote

And threw him : last I spurr'd ; I felt  
my veins

Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment hand  
to hand,

And sword to sword, and horse to horse  
we hung,

Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade  
glanced ;

I did but shear a feather, and dream and  
truth

Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me ;  
and I fell.

---

Home they brought her warrior dead :

She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :

All her maidens, watching, said,

“She must weep or she will die.”

Then they praised him, soft and low,

Call'd him worthy to be loved,



"Like summer tempest came her tears—  
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'"

Truest friend and noblest foe ;  
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
Lightly to the warrior stopt,  
Took the face-cloth from the face ;  
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee—  
Like summer tempest came her tears—  
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

## VI.

My dream had never died or lived again.  
As in some mystic middle state I lay ;  
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard :  
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me  
all

So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
That all things grew more tragic and  
more strange ;

That when our side was vanquish'd and  
my cause

For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
The Prince is slain. My father heard  
and ran

In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque  
And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on  
the roofs

Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

“Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n :  
the seed,

The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown  
a bulk

Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

“Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n :  
they came ;

The leaves were wet with women's tears :  
they heard

A noise of songs they would not under-  
stand :

They mark'd it with the red cross to the  
fall,

And would have strown it, and are fall'n  
themselves.

“Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n :  
they came,

The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !  
But we will make it fagots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof  
and floor,

And boats and bridges for the use of men.

“Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n :  
they struck ;

With their own blows they hurt them-  
selves, nor knew

There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
The glittering axe was broken in their  
arms,

Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder  
blade.

“Our enemies have fall'n, but this  
shall grow

A night of Summer from the heat, a  
breadth

Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ;  
and roll'd

With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star,  
the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

“And now, O maids, behold our sanc-  
tuary

Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof,  
whose arms

Champion'd our cause and won it with  
a day

Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual  
feast,

When dames and heroines of the golden  
year

Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of  
Spring,

To rain an April of ovation round  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but  
come,

We will be liberal, since our rights are  
won.

Let them not lie in the tents with coarse  
mankind,

Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these  
The brethren of our blood and cause,

that there  
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender  
ministries

Of female hands and hospitality.”

She spoke, and with the babe yet in  
her arms,

Descending, burst the great bronze  
valves, and led

A hundred maids in train across the Park.  
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on  
they came,

Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by  
them went

The enamor'd air sighing, and on their  
curls

From the high tree the blossom wavering  
fell,

And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade : but  
Blanche

At distance follow'd : so they came : anon  
Thro' open field into the lists they wound

Timorously ; and as the leader of the herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,

And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,

The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay ;

there stay'd ;



Knelt on one knee, — the child on one,  
 — and prest  
 Their hands, and call'd them dear deliv-  
 erers,  
 And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
 And said "You shall not lie in the tents  
 but here,  
 And nursed by those for whom you  
 fought, and served  
 With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or was  
 it chance,  
 She past my way. Up started from my  
 side  
 The old lion, glaring with his whelpless  
 eye,  
 Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,  
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly  
 pale,  
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and when  
 she saw  
 The haggard father's face and reverend  
 beard  
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain  
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her fore-  
 head past  
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and she  
 said :  
 "He saved my life : my brother slew  
 him for it."  
 No more : at which the king in bitter  
 scorn  
 Drew from my neck the painting and  
 the tress,  
 And held them up : she saw them, and a  
 day  
 Rose from the distance on her memory,  
 When the good Queen, her mother, shore  
 the tress  
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :  
 And then once more she look'd at my  
 pale face :  
 Till understanding all the foolish work  
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
 Her iron will was broken in her mind ;  
 Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;  
 She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ;  
 she laid  
 A feeling finger on my brows, and pres-  
 ently  
 "O Sire," she said, "he lives : he is  
 not dead :  
 O let me have him with my brethren here  
 In our own palace : we will tend on him  
 Like one of these ; if so, by any means,

To lighten this great clog of thanks, that  
 make  
 Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said : but at the happy word "he  
 lives"  
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my  
 wounds.  
 So those two foes above my fallen life,  
 With brow to brow like night and even-  
 ing mixt  
 Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever  
 stole  
 A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden  
 brede,  
 Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
 Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to  
 dance  
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent  
 arms  
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
 Brook'd not, but clamoring out, "Mine—  
 mine — not yours,  
 It is not yours, but mine : give me the  
 child"  
 Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :  
 So stood the unhappy mother open-  
 mouth'd,  
 And turn'd each face her way : wan was  
 her cheek  
 With hollow watch, her blooming man-  
 tle torn,  
 Red grief and mother's hunger in hereye,  
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls,  
 and half  
 The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
 The laces toward her babe ; but she nor  
 cared  
 Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,  
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,  
 stood  
 Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
 The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay  
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
 Trail'd himself up on one knee ; then he  
 drew  
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down she  
 look'd  
 At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it  
 seem'd,  
 Orself-involved ; but when she learnt his  
 face,  
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er  
 him grew



Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he  
said :

“O fair and strong and terrible ! Lioness  
That with your long locks play the Lion's  
mane !

But Love and Nature, these are two more  
terrible

And stronger. See, your foot is on our  
necks,

We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your  
will.

What would you more ? give her the child !  
remain

Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead,

Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :

Win you the hearts of women ; and beware  
Lest, where you seek the common love  
of these,

The common hate with the revolving  
wheel

Should drag you down, and some great  
Nemesis

Break from a darken'd future, crown'd  
with fire,

And tread you out forever : but howsoe'er  
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,  
Give her the child ! O if, I say, you keep  
One pulse that beats true woman, if you  
loved

The breast that fed or arm that dandled  
you,

Orown one part of sense not flint to prayer,  
Give her the child ! or if you scorn to  
lay it,

Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with  
yours,

Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault  
The tenderness, not yours, that could  
not kill,

Give me it : I will give it her.”

He said :

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd  
Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and  
sank

And, into mournful twilight mellowing,  
dwelt

Full on the child ; she took it : “ Pretty  
bud !

Lily of the vale ! half open'd bell of the  
woods !

Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world  
Of traitorous friend and broken system  
made

No purple in the distance, mystery,

Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell ;  
These men are hard upon us as of old,  
We two must part : and yet how fain was I  
To dream thy cause embraced in mine,  
to think

I might be something to thee, when I felt  
Thy helpless warmth about my barren  
breast

In the dead prime : but may thy mother  
prove

As true to thee as false, false, false to me !

And, if thou needs must bear the yoke,  
I wish it

Gentle as freedom” — here she kiss'd it :  
then —

“All good go with thee ! take it Sir”  
and so

Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed  
hands,

Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she  
sprang

To meet it, with an eye that swum in  
thanks ;

Then felt it sound and whole from head  
to foot,

And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close  
enough,

And in her hunger mouth'd and mum-  
bled it,

And hid her bosom with it ; after that  
Put on more calm and added suppliantly ;

“We two were friends : I go to mine  
own land

For ever : find some other : as for me

I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet  
speak to me,

Say one soft word and let me part  
forgiven.”

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.

Then Arac. “Ida—'s death ! you blame  
the man ;

You wrong yourselves — the woman is  
so hard

Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me !

I am your warrior : I and mine have fought

Your battle : kiss her ; take her hand,  
she weeps :

'Sdeath ! I would sooner fight thrice o'er  
than see it.”

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,

And reddening in the furrows of his  
chin,

And moved beyond his custom, Gama  
said :

"I've heard that there is iron in the  
 blood,  
 And I believe it. Not one word? not one?  
 Whence drew you this steel temper? not  
 from me,  
 Not from your mother now a saint with  
 saints.  
 She said you had a heart—I heard her  
 say it—  
 'Our Ida has a heart'—just ere she  
 died—  
 'But see that some one with authority  
 Be near her still' and I—I sought for  
 one—  
 All people said she had authority—  
 The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not  
 one word;  
 No! tho' your father sues: see how you  
 stand  
 Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights  
 maim'd,  
 I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
 For your wild whim: and was it then for  
 this,  
 Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
 Where we withdrew from summer heats  
 and state,  
 And had our wine and chess beneath the  
 planes,  
 And many a pleasant hour with her that's  
 gone,  
 Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?  
 Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,  
 When first she came, all flush'd you said  
 to me  
 Now had you got a friend of your own age,  
 Now could you share your thought; now  
 should men see  
 Two women faster welded in one love  
 Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd  
 with, she  
 You talk'd with, whole nights long, up  
 in the tower,  
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
 And right ascension, Heaven knows what;  
 and now  
 A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
 Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!  
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,  
 You shame your mother's judgment too.  
 Not one?  
 You will not? well—no heart have you,  
 or such  
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
 Have fretted all to dust and bitterness."  
 So said the small king moved beyond his  
 wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her  
 force  
 By many a varying influence and so long.  
 Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor  
 wept:  
 Her head a little bent; and on her mouth  
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded  
 moon  
 In a still water: then brake out my sire  
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds.  
 "O you,  
 Woman, whom we thought woman even  
 now,  
 And were half fool'd to let you tend our  
 son,  
 Because he might have wish'd it—but  
 we see  
 The accomplice of your madness unfor-  
 given,  
 And think that you might mix his draught  
 with death,  
 When your skies change again: the  
 rougher hand  
 Is safer: on to the tents: take up the  
 Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd  
 to attend  
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd  
 her broke  
 A genial warmth and light once more,  
 and shone  
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.  
 "Come hither.  
 O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace me,  
 come,  
 Quick while I melt; make reconciliation  
 sure  
 With one that cannot keep her mind an  
 hour:  
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so!  
 Kiss and be friends, like children being  
 chid!  
 I seem no more: I want forgiveness too:  
 I should have had to do with none but  
 maids,  
 That have no links with men. Ah false  
 but dear,  
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—  
 why?—Yet see,  
 Before these kings we embrace you yet  
 once more  
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust, not love, you less.  
 And now, O sire,  
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait  
 upon him,

Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,  
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it ;  
 Taunt me no more : yourself and yours shall have  
 Free adit ; we will scatter all our maids  
 Till happier times each to her proper hearth :  
 What use to keep them here — now ? grant my prayer.  
 Help, father, brother, help ; speak to the king :  
 Thaw this male nature to some touch of that  
 Which kills me with myself, and drags me down  
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
 Poor weakling ev'n as they are.”  
 Passionate tears  
 Follow'd : the king replied not : Cyril said :  
 “ Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for him  
 Of your great head — for he is wounded too —  
 That you may tend upon him with the prince.”  
 “ Ay so,” said Ida with a bitter smile,  
 “ Our laws are broken : let him enter too.”  
 Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,  
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
 Petition'd too for him. “ Ay so,” she said,  
 “ I stagger in the stream : I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling hour :  
 We break our laws with ease, but let it be.”  
 “ Ay so ? ” said Blanche : “ Amazed am I to hear  
 Your Highness : but your Highness breaks with ease  
 The law your Highness did not make : 't was I.  
 I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
 And block'd them out ; but these men came to woo  
 Your Highness — verily I think to win.”

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye :  
 But Ida with a voice, that like a bell  
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,  
 Rangruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

“ Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not one, but all,  
 Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,  
 Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,  
 Till the storm die ! but had you stood by us,  
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base  
 Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,  
 But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.  
 We brook no further insult but are gone.”

She turn'd ; the very nape of her white neck  
 Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince  
 Her brother came ; the king her father charm'd  
 Her wounded soul with words : nor did mine own  
 Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare  
 Straight to the doors : to them the doors gave way  
 Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd  
 The virgin marble under iron heels :  
 And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there  
 Rested : but great the crush was, and each base,  
 To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd  
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
 Of female whisperers : at the further end  
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
 Close by her, like supporters on a shield,  
 Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre stood  
 The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed  
 They glared upon the women, and aghast  
 The women stared at these, all silent, save  
 When armor clash'd or jingled, while the day,  
 Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot  
 A flying splendor out of brass and steel,  
 That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,  
 Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
 Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
 And now and then an echo started up,

And shuddering fled from room to room,  
and died  
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice  
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :

And me they bore up the broad stairs,  
and thro'

The long-laid galleries past a hundred  
doors

To one deep chamber shut from sound,  
and due

To languid limbs and sickness ; left me  
in it ;

And others elsewhere they laid ; and all  
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
Till happier times ; but some were left  
of those

Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
From those two hosts that lay beside the  
walls,

Walk'd at their will, and everything was  
changed.

---

Ask me no more : the moon may draw  
the sea ;

The cloud may stoop from heaven and  
take the shape,

With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;  
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee ?

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I  
give ?

I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :  
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee  
die !

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are  
seal'd :

I strove against the stream and all in  
vain :

Let the great river take me to the  
main :

No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;  
Ask me no more.

## VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;  
At first with all confusion : by and by  
Sweet order lived again with other laws :

A kindlier influence reign'd ; and every-  
where

Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick : the maidens came,  
they talk'd,

They sang, they read : till she not fair,  
began

To gather light, and she that was, became  
Her former beauty treble , and to and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel of-  
fices,

Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they  
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with  
shame.

Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke ;  
but oft

Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for  
hours

On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field : void was  
her use,

And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black  
cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of  
night,

Blot out the slope of sea from verge to  
shore,

And suck the blinding splendor from the  
sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn by  
tarn

Expunge the world : so fared she gazing  
there ;

So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank  
And waste it seem'd and vain ; till down  
she came,

And found fair peace once more among  
the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by  
morn the lark

Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,  
but I

Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :  
And twilight gloom'd ; and broader -  
grown the bowers

Drew the great night into themselves,  
and Heaven,

Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could  
reach me, lay

Quite under'd from the moving Universe,



Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the  
hand  
That nursed me, more than infants in their  
sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with her  
oft,  
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but  
left  
Her child among us, willing she should  
keep  
Court-favor : here and there the small  
bright head,  
A light of healing, glanced about the  
couch,  
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
With blush and smile, a medicine in  
themselves  
To wile the length from languorous hours,  
and draw  
The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange  
that soon  
He rose up whole, and those fair chari-  
ties  
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd  
that hearts  
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in  
love,  
Than when two dewdrops on the petal  
shake  
To the same sweet air, and tremble  
deeper down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit ob-  
tain'd  
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche  
had sworn  
That after that dark night among the  
fields,  
She needs must wed him for her own  
good name ;  
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ;  
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but  
fear'd  
To incense the Head once more ; till on  
a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung  
A moment, and she heard, at which her  
face  
A little flush'd, and she past on ; but each  
Assumed from thence a half-consent in-  
volved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at  
peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid  
and man.

Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor  
yet  
Did those twin brothers, risen again and  
whole ;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :  
Then came a change ; for sometimes I  
would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
" You are not Ida " ; clasp it once again,  
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold which seem'd  
a truth :  
And still she fear'd that I should lose my  
mind,  
And often she believed that I should die :  
Till out of long frustration of her care,  
And pensive tondance in the all-weary  
noons,  
And watches in the dead, the dark, when  
clocks  
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors,  
or call'd  
On flying Time from all their silver  
tongues —  
And out of memories of her kindlier  
days,  
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
And at the happy lovers heart in heart —  
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd  
dream,  
And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
And wordless broodings on the wasted  
cheek —  
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to  
these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with  
tears  
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at  
first  
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but wellnigh close  
to death  
For weakness : it was evening : silent  
light

Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought

Two grand designs ; for on one side arose  
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they  
cramm'd

The forum, and half-crush'd among the  
rest

A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other  
side

Hortensia spoke against the tax ; behind,  
A train of dames : by axe and eagle sat,  
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman  
scowls,

And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their  
veins,

The fierce triumvirs ; and before them  
paused

Hortensia, pleading : angry was her face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where I  
was :

They did but look like hollow shows ; nor  
more

Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat : the dew  
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
And rounder seem'd : I moved : I sigh'd :  
a touch

Came round my wrist, and tears upon my  
hand :

Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
Mine down my face, and with what life I  
had,

And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
Sodrench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,  
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisper-  
ingly :

“If you be, what I think you, some  
sweet dream,

I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :  
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,  
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die  
to-night.

Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.”

I could no more, but lay like one in  
trance,

That hears his burial talk'd of by his  
friends,

And cannot speak, nor move, nor make  
one sign,

But lies and dreads his doom. She  
turn'd ; she paused ;

She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt a cry ;

Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of  
death ;

And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she  
rose

Glowing all over noble shame ; and all  
Her falsèr self slipt from her like a robe,  
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
Than in her mould that other, when she  
came

From barren deeps to conquer all with  
love ;

And down the streaming crystal dropt ;  
and she

Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd  
her out

For worship without end ; nor end of  
mine,

Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she glided  
forth,

Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and  
slept,

Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy  
sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she, near  
me, held

A volume of the Poets of her land :  
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

“Now sleeps the crimson petal, now  
the white ;

Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry  
font :

The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

“Now droops the milkwhite peacock  
like a ghost,

And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

“Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the  
stars,

And all thy heart lies open unto me.

“Now slides the silent meteor on, and  
leaves

A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

“Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake :

So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and  
slip

Into my bosom and be lost in me.”



"Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height :  
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills ?"

I heard her turn the page ; she found  
a small  
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she  
read :

"Come down, O maid, from yonder  
mountain height :  
What pleasure lives in height (the shep-  
herd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendor of the  
hills ?

But cease to move so near the Heavens,  
and cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,

Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver  
horns,

Nor wilt thou snare him in the white  
ravine,

Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven  
falls

To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :  
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee  
down

To find him in the valley ; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and  
spill

Their thousand wreaths of dangling  
water-smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air :  
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all  
the vales



Await thee, azure pillars of the hearth  
 Arise to thee; the children call, and I  
 Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every  
 sound,

Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is  
 sweet;  
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the  
 lawn,  
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
 And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut  
 eyes I lay  
 Listening; then look'd. Pale was the  
 perfect face;  
 The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and  
 meek  
 Seem'd the full lips, and mild the lu-  
 minous eyes,  
 And the voice trembled and the hand.  
 She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
 In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;  
 That all her labor was but as a block  
 Left in the quarry; but she still were loath,  
 She still were loath to yield herself to one,  
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal  
 rights

Against the sons of men, and barbarous  
 laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their cause  
 from her

That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth  
 than power

In knowledge: something wild within  
 her breast,

A greater than all knowledge, beat her  
 down.

And she had nursed me there from week  
 to week:

Much had she learnt in little time. In part  
 It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
 To vex true hearts: yet was she but a  
 girl—

"Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of  
 farce!

When comes another such? never, I think,  
 Till the Sun drop dead from the signs."

Her voice  
 Choked, and her forehead sank upon her  
 hands,

And her great heart thro' all the faultful  
 Past

Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not  
 break;

Till notice of a change in the dark world  
 Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,

That early woke to feed her little ones,  
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:  
 She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

"Blame not thyself too much," I said,  
 "nor blame

Too much the sons of men and barbarous  
 laws;

These were the rough ways of the world  
 till now.

Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that  
 know

The woman's cause is man's: they rise  
 or sink

Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:  
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
 The shining steps of Nature, shares with  
 man

His nights, his days, moves with him to  
 one goal,

Stays all the fair young planet in her  
 hands—

If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
 How shall men grow? but work no more  
 alone!

Our place is much: as far as in us lies  
 We two will serve them both in aiding  
 her—

Will clear away the parasitic forms  
 That seem to keep her up but drag her  
 down—

Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
 Within her—let her make herself her own  
 To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
 All that not harms distinctive woman-  
 hood.

For woman is not undevelop'd man,  
 But diverse: could we make her as the  
 man,

Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond  
 is this,

Not like to like, but like in difference.

Yet in the long years liker must they grow;  
 The man be more of woman, she of man;  
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw  
 the world;

She mental breadth, nor fail in childward  
 care,

Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;  
 Till at the last she set herself to man,

Like perfect music unto noble words;  
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of  
 Time,

Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their  
 powers,

Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,



Self-reverent each and reverencing each,  
Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
Then comes the statelier Eden back to  
men :

Then reign the world's great bridals,  
chaste and calm :

Then springs the crowning race of hu-  
mankind.

May these things be ! "

Sighing she spoke " I fear  
They will not. "

" Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watch-  
word rest

Of equal ; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought in  
thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one  
full stroke,

Life. "

And again sighing she spoke : " A dream  
That once was mine ! what woman taught  
you this ? "

" Alone " I said " from earlier than I  
know,  
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the  
world,

I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives  
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than  
death,

Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with  
crime :

Yet was there one thro' whom I loved  
her, one

Not learned, save in gracious household  
ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds  
perforce

Sway'd to her from their orbits as they  
moved,

And girdled her with music Happy he  
With such a mother ! faith in womankind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all  
things high

Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and  
fall

He shall not blind his soul with clay. "  
" But I, "

Said Ida, tremulously, " so all unlike—  
It seems you love to cheat yourself with  
words :

This mother is your model. I have heard  
Of your strange doubts : they well might  
be : I seem

A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;  
You cannot love me. "

" Nay but thee " I said  
" From yearlong poring on thy pictured  
eyes,

Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,  
and saw

Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods  
That mask'd thee from men's reverence  
up, and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood :  
now,

Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'  
thee,

Indeed I love : the new day comes, the  
light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my doubts  
are dead,

My haunting sense of hollow shows : the  
change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd it.  
Dear,

Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,  
Like yonder morning on the blind half-  
world ;

Approach and fear not ; breathe upon my  
brows ;

In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and  
this

Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland  
reels

Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.  
Forgive me,

I waste my heart in signs : let be. My  
bride,

My wife, my life. O we will walk this  
world,

Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so thro' those dark gates across the  
wild

That no man knows. Indeed I love thee:  
come,

Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine  
are one :

Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself ;  
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

## CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all  
The random scheme as wildly as it rose :  
The words are mostly mine ; for when  
we ceased

There came a minute's pause, and Walter  
said,

"I wish she had not yielded !" then to me,  
"What, if you drest it up poetically !"  
So pray'd the men, the women : I gave  
assent :

Yet how to bind the scattered scheme of  
seven

Together in one sheaf ? What style could  
suit ?

The men required that I should give  
throughout

The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
With which we banter'd little Lilia first :  
The women — and perhaps they felt their  
power,

For something in the ballads which they  
sang,

Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn  
close —

They hated banter, wish'd for something  
real,

A gallant fight, a noble princess — why  
Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime ?  
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close ?  
Which yet with such a framework scarce  
could be.

Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists :  
And I, betwixt them both, to please  
them both,

And yet to give the story as it rose,  
I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself nor  
them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no  
part

In our dispute : the sequel of the tale  
Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she pluck'd  
the grass,

She flung it from her, thinking : last,  
she fixt

A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
"You — tell us what we are" who might  
have told,

For she was cramm'd with theories out  
of books,

But that there rose a shout : the gates  
were closed

At sunset, and the crowd were swarming  
now,

To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these : we  
climb'd

The slope to Vivian-place, and turningsaw  
The happy valleys, half in light, and half  
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of  
peace ;

Gray halls alone among their massive  
groves ;

Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic  
tower

Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of  
wheat ;

The shimmering glimpses of a stream ;  
the seas ;

A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,  
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of  
France.

"Look there, a garden !" said my  
college friend,

The Tory member's elder son "and there !  
God bless the narrow sea which keeps  
her off,

And keeps our Britain, whole within  
herself,

A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —  
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
Some reverence for the laws ourselves  
have made,

Some patient force to change them when  
we will,

Some civic manhood firm against the  
crowd —

But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sudden  
heat,

The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
The king is scared, the soldier will not  
fight,

The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
Like an old woman, and down rolls the  
world

In mock heroics stranger than our own ;  
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most

No graver than a schoolboys' barring out ;  
Too comic for the solemn things they are,

Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream  
As some of theirs — God bless the narrow  
seas !  
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves  
are full  
Of social wrong ; and maybe wildest  
dreams  
Are but the needful preludes of the truth :  
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
Thesport half-science, fill me with a faith,  
This fine old world of ours is but a child  
Yet in the go-cart. Patience ! Give it  
time  
To learn its limbs : there is a hand that  
guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the gar-  
den rails,  
And there we saw Sir Walter where he  
stood,  
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and  
look'd  
No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
A great broad-shoulder'd genial English-  
man,  
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ;  
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn ;  
Now shaking hands with him, now him,  
of those  
That stood the nearest — now address'd  
to speech —  
Who spoke few words and pithy, such  
as closed

Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the  
year  
To follow : a shout rose again, and made  
The long line of the approaching rook-  
ery swerve  
From the elms, and shook the branches  
of the deer  
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,  
and rang  
Beyond the bourn of sunset ; O, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
Premier or king ! Why should not these  
great Sirs  
Give up their parks some dozen times a  
year  
To let the people breathe ? So thrice they  
cried,  
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd  
away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and  
sat on,  
So much the gathering darkness charm'd :  
we sat  
But spoke not, rapt in nameless revery,  
Perchance upon the future man : the walls  
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls  
whoop'd,  
And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke  
them up  
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of  
Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir  
Ralph  
From those rich silks, and home well-  
pleased we went.

## IN MEMORIAM.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not why ;  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;  
They have their day and cease to be :  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see ;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
We mock thee when we do not fear :  
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;  
What seem'd my worth since I began ;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

## IN MEMORIAM.

A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

## I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
And find in loss a gain to match ?  
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
Let darkness keep her raven gloss :  
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
The long result of love, and boast,  
" Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn."

## II.

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock ;  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

## III.

O SORROW, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip ?



"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run ;  
A web is wov'n across the sky ;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun :

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own, —  
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good ;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

## IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
"What is it makes me beat so low ?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes ;  
With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

## V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel ;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies ;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;  
But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VI.

ONE writes, that "Other friends remain,"  
That "Loss is common to the race"—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more :  
Too common ! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
Who pledgest now thy gallant son ;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well ;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,  
Or here to-morrow will he come.

O somewhere, meek unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest ;  
And thinking "this will please him  
best,"

She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;  
And with the thought her color burns ;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?  
And what to me remains of good ?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

## VII.

DARK house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more, —  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## VIII.

A HAPPY lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,  
And learns her gone and far from home ;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to meet,  
The field, the chamber, and the street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying, there at least may die.

## IX.

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sailst the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain ; a favorable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

## X.

I HEAR the noise about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night ;  
I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign lands ;  
And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI.

CALM is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening  
towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :



"Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
Saillest the placid ocean-plains."

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; " Comes he thus, my friend ?  
Is this the end of all my care ?"  
And circle moaning in the air :  
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ?"

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn,  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII.

TEARS of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart reposed ;  
And, where warm hands have prest and  
closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
An awful thought, a life removed,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
I do not suffer in a dream ;



For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approachingsails,  
As tho' they brought but merchants'  
bales,  
And not the burden that they bring.

## XIV.

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-  
day,  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine ;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV.

TO-NIGHT the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day :  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a laboring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI.

WHAT words are these have fall'n from me ?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or storm ;  
But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink ?  
And stunn'd me from my power to think  
And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan ?

## XVII.

THOU comest, much wept for : such a  
breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week : the days go by :  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee ;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.



## XVIII.

'T is well ; 't is something ; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'T is little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## XIX.

THE Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX.

THE lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the mind :  
"It will be hard," they say, "to find  
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win ;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
"How good ! how kind ! and he is gone."

## XXI.

I SING to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak ;  
"This fellow would make weakness  
weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, "Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth, "Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

"A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon ?"

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :  
Ye never knew the sacred dust :  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged ;  
And one is sad ; her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII.

THE path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And, crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
And think that somewhere in the waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits,  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where  
it ran

Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb ;  
But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with  
Thought  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood ;

And many an old philosophy  
On Argive heights divinely sang,  
And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady.

## XXIV.

AND was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say ?  
The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so great ?  
The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief ?

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far ;  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein ?

## XXV.

I KNOW that this was Life, — the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared ;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air ;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love :

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in  
twain  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI.

STILL onward winds the dreary way ;  
I with it ; for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to see  
Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fall'n as soon as built —

O, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see (in Him is no before)  
In more of life true life no more  
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII.

I ENVY not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth,  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth ;  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
'T is better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ :  
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX.

WITH such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight,  
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and  
Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time ? They too will die.

## XXX.

WITH trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gamboll'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :  
We heard them sweep the winter land ;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
"They rest," we said, "their sleep is  
sweet,"

And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;  
Once more we sang : "They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change ;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from night :  
O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

## XXXI.

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded — if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four  
days ?"

There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;  
He told it not ; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII.

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful  
prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

## XXXIII.

O THOU that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
Whose faith hath centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
Her early Heaven, her happy views ;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good :  
O, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV.

MY own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?  
'T were hardly worth my while to choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die ;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV.

YET if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow house,  
"The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;  
Man dies : nor is there hope in dust" :

Might I not say, " Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive " ?  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or slow  
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
"The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and  
more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case ? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the  
grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI.

THO' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.



And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
 With human hands the creed of creeds  
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
 More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
 And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
 In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII.

URANIA speaks with darken'd brow :  
 "Thou pratest here where thou art  
 least ;

This faith has many a purer priest,  
 And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,  
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
 About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,  
 A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
 "I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
 Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,  
 And owning but a little art  
 To lull with song an aching heart,  
 And render human love his dues ;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,  
 And all he said of things divine,  
 (And dear to me as sacred wine  
 To dying lips is all he said,)

"I murmur'd, as I came along,  
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd ;  
 And loiter'd in the master's field,  
 And darken'd sanctities with song."

## XXXVIII.

WITH weary steps I loiter on,  
 Tho' always under alter'd skies  
 The purple from the distance dies,  
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
 The herald melodies of spring,  
 But in the songs I love to sing  
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
 Survive in spirits render'd free,  
 Then are these songs I sing of thee  
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX.

OLD warder of these buried bones,  
 And answering now my random stroke  
 With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
 To thee too comes the golden hour  
 When flower is feeling after flower ;  
 But Sorrow fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,  
 What whisper'd from her lying lips ?  
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
 And passes into gloom again.

## XL.

COULD we forget the widow'd hour  
 And look on Spirits breathed away,  
 As on a maiden in the day  
 When first she wears her orange-flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
 To take her latest leave of home,  
 And hopes and light regrets that come  
 Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
 And tears are on the mother's face,  
 As parting with a long embrace  
 She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
 Becoming as is meet and fit  
 A link among the days, to knit  
 The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
 A life that bears immortal fruit  
 In such great offices as suit  
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
 How often shall her old fireside  
 Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
 And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
 Till even those that miss'd her most,  
 Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
 Till growing winters lay me low ;  
 My paths are in the fields I know,  
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XLI.

THY spirit ere our fatal loss  
 Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
 As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
 As flies the lighter thro' the groud.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
 And I have lost the links that bound  
 Thy changes ; here upon the ground,  
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be, —  
 That I could wing my will with might  
 To leap the grades of life and light,  
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee :

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
 To that vague fear implied in death ;  
 Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
 The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
 An inner trouble I behold,  
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
 That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
 The wonders that have come to thee,  
 Thro' all the secular to-be,  
 But evermore a life behind.

## XLII.

I VEX my heart with fancies dim :  
 He still outstrip me in the race ;  
 It was but unity of place  
 That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
 And he the much-beloved again,  
 A lord of large experience, train  
 To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those  
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
 When one that loves but knows not,  
 reaps  
 A truth from one that loves and knows ?

## XLIII.

IF Sleep and Death be truly one,  
 And every spirit's folded bloom  
 Thro' all its intervital gloom  
 In some long trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
 Bare of the body, might it last,  
 And silent traces of the past  
 Be all the color of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;  
 So that still garden of the souls  
 In many a figured leaf enrolls  
 The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole  
 As when he loved me here in Time,  
 And at the spiritual prime  
 Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead ?  
 For here the man is more and more ;  
 But he forgets the days before  
 God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
 Gives out at times (he knows not  
 whence)

A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years  
 (If Death so taste Lethean springs)  
 May some dim touch of earthly things  
 Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
 O turn thee round, resolve the doubt ;  
 My guardian angel will speak out  
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLV.

THE baby new to earth and sky,  
 What time his tender palm is prest  
 Against the circle of the breast,  
 Has never thought that "this is I" :

But as he grows he gathers much,  
 And learns the use of "I," and "me,"  
 And finds "I am not what I see,  
 And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind  
 From whence clear memory may begin,  
 As thro' the frame that binds him in  
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
 Which else were fruitless of their due,  
 Had man to learn himself anew  
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

## XLVI.

WE ranging down this lower track,  
 The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last  
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
 But clear from marge to marge shall  
 bloom  
 The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;  
 The fruitful hours of still increase;  
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
 A bounded field, nor stretching far;  
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVII.

THAT each, who seems a separate whole,  
 Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
 The skirts of self again, should fall  
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:  
 Eternal form shall still divide  
 The eternal soul from all beside;  
 And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
 Enjoying each the other's good:  
 What vaster dream can hit the mood  
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
 Before the spirits fade away,  
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
 "Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

## XLVIII.

IF these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
 Were taken to be such as closed  
 Grave doubts and answers here pro-  
 posed,  
 Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;  
 She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
 What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
 And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
 But better serves a wholesome law,  
 And holds it sin and shame to draw  
 The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
 But rather loosens from the lip  
 Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLIX.

FROM art, from nature, from the schools,  
 Let random influences glance,  
 Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
 That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
 The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,  
 The slightest air of song shall breathe  
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
 But blame not thou the winds that  
 make  
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
 The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
 Ay me! the sorrow deepens down,  
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
 The bases of my life in tears.

## L.

BE near me when my light is low,  
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves  
 prick  
 And tingle; and the heart is sick,  
 And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;  
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
 And men the flies of latter spring,  
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,  
 And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
 To point the term of human strife,  
 And on the low dark verge of life  
 The twilight of eternal day.

## LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead  
 Should still be near us at our side?  
 Is there no baseness we would hide?  
 No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
 I had such reverence for his blame,  
 See with clear eye some hidden shame  
 And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:  
 Shall love be blamed for want of faith?

There must be wisdom with great  
Death :  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LII.

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved ;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"  
The Spirit of true love replied ;  
"Thou canst not move me from thyside,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears ?  
What record ? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :

"So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from  
pearl."

## LIII.

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green :

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild oat not been sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
The grain by which a man may live ?

O, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIV.

O YET we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last — far off — at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
An infant crying in the night :  
An infant crying for the light :  
And with no language but a cry.

## LV.

THE wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LVI.

"So careful of the type ?" but no.  
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, "A thousand types are gone :  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :  
I bring to life, I bring to death :  
The spirit does but mean the breath :  
I know no more." And he, shall he,



Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
 And love Creation's final law —  
 Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
 Who battled for the True, the Just,  
 Be blown about the desert dust,  
 Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
 That tare each other in their slime,  
 Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
 What hope of answer, or redress?  
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVII.

PEACE; come away: the song of woe  
 Is after all an earthly song:  
 Peace; come away: we do him wrong  
 To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;  
 But half my life I leave behind:  
 Methinks my friend is richly shrined;  
 But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
 One set slow bell will seem to toll  
 The passing of the sweetest soul  
 That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
 Eternal greetings to the dead;  
 And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,  
 "Adieu, adieu" for evermore.

## LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell:  
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
 As drop by drop the water falls  
 In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
 Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
 Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
 And those cold crypts where they shall  
 cease.

The high Muse answer'd: "Wherefore  
 grieve  
 Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
 Abide a little longer here,  
 And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

## LIX.

O SORROW, wilt thou live with me,  
 No casual mistress, but a wife,  
 My bosom-friend and half of life;  
 As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
 And put thy harsher moods aside,  
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
 Nor will it lessen from to-day;  
 But I'll have leave at times to play  
 As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
 With so much hope for years to come,  
 That, howso'er I know thee, some  
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

## LX.

HE past; a soul of nobler tone:  
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
 Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
 She finds the baseness of her lot,  
 Half jealous of she knows not what,  
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;  
 She sighs amid her narrow days,  
 Moving about the household ways,  
 In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,  
 And tease her till the day draws by:  
 At night she weeps, "How vain am I!  
 How should he love a thing so low?"

## LXI.

IF, in thy second state sublime,  
 Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
 With all the circle of the wise,  
 The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
 How dimly character'd and slight,

How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man ;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

## LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies,  
Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXIII.

YET pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unt'c vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labor of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands ;  
" Does my old friend remember me ? "

## LXV.

SWEET soul, do with me as thou wilt ;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With " Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt. "

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased ;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVII.

WHEN on my bed the moonlight falls,  
 I know that in thy place of rest,  
 By that broad water of the west,  
 There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
 As slowly steals a silver flame  
 Along the letters of thy name,  
 And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
 From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn  
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
 And in the dark church like a ghost  
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVIII.

WHEN in the down I sink my head,  
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my  
 breath ;  
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows  
 not Death,  
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
 When all our path was fresh with dew,  
 And all the bugle breezes blew  
 Reveillé to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,  
 I find a trouble in thine eye,  
 Which makes me sad I know not why,  
 Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
 I wake, and I discern the truth ;  
 It is the trouble of my youth  
 That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXIX.

I DREAM'D there would be Spring no more,  
 That Nature's ancient power was lost :  
 The streets were black with smoke  
 and frost,  
 They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
 I found a wood with thorny boughs :  
 I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
 I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
 From youth and babe and hoary hairs :

They call'd me in the public squares  
 The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child :  
 I found an angel of the night ;  
 The voice was low, the look was bright ;  
 He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
 That seem'd to touch it into leaf :  
 The voice was not the voice of grief,  
 The words were hard to understand.

## LXX.

I CANNOT see the features right,  
 When on the gloom I strive to paint  
 The face I know ; the hues are faint  
 And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
 A hand that points, and palled shapes  
 In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning  
 doors,  
 And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
 Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
 And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will  
 I hear a wizard music roll,  
 And thro' a lattice on the soul  
 Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXXI.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance  
 And madness, thou hast forged at last  
 A night-long Present of the Past  
 In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?  
 Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
 Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong  
 That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
 Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
 The days that grow to something  
 strange,  
 In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
 The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
 The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
 The breaker breaking on the beach.





"I found a wood with thorny boughs."

LXXII.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Whomightst have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd

A checker-work of beam and shade  
Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous  
crime,

When the dark hand struck down thro'  
time,  
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burden'd brows  
Thro' clouds that drench the morning  
star,

And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;



Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true ?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath :  
I curse not nature, no, nor death ;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass ; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out — to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXV.

I LEAVE thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;  
But somewhere, out of human view,  
Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXVI.

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,  
And in a moment set thy face  
Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'  
The secular abyss to come,  
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy  
bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

## LXXVII.

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
Agrief, then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVIII.

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
 No wing of wind the region swept,  
 But over all things brooding slept  
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
 Again our ancient games had place,  
 The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?  
 No single tear, no mark of pain :  
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?  
 O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die !  
 No—mixt with all this mystic frame,  
 Her deep relations are the same,  
 But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXXIX.

"MORE than my brothers are to me"—  
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
 I know thee of what force thou art  
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
 As moulded like in nature's mint ;  
 And hill and wood and field did print  
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
 Thro' all his eddying coves ; the same  
 All winds that roam the twilight came  
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
 But he was rich where I was poor,  
 And he supplied my want the more  
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,  
 That holy Death ere Arthur died  
 Had moved me kindly from his side,  
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
 A grief as deep as life or thought,  
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;  
 I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
 He bears the burden of the weeks ;  
 But turns his burden into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;  
 And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
 Unused example from the grave  
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXXI.

COULD I have said while he was here,  
 "My love shall now no further range ;  
 There cannot come a mellower change,  
 For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store :  
 What end is here to my complaint ?  
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
 "More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet :  
 "My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
 It might have drawn from after-heat."

## LXXXII.

I WAGE not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and face ;  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks ;  
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
 The use of virtue out of earth :  
 I know transplanted human worth  
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
 The wrath that garners in my heart ;  
 He put our lives so far apart  
 We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXIII.

DIP down upon the northern shore,  
 O sweet new-year delaying long ;  
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;  
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
 Thy sweetness from its proper place ?  
 Can trouble live with April days,  
 Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud,  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIV.

WHEN I contemplate all alone  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou shouldst link thy life with  
one  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee ;  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.  
I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

While now thy prosperous labor fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;  
And all the train of bounteous hours  
Conduct by paths of growing powers  
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant ?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXV.

THIS truth came borne with bier and pall,  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'T is better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;  
And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little  
worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of  
him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
 O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
 O sacred essence, other form,  
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,  
 How much of act at human hands  
 The sense of human will demands  
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
 His being working in mine own,  
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
 With gifts of grace, that might express  
 All-comprehensive tenderness,  
 All-subtilizing intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
 To works of weakness, but I find  
 An image comforting the mind,  
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
 Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
 For other friends that once I met ;  
 Nor can it suit me to forget  
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime  
 To mourn for any overmuch ;  
 I, the divided half of such  
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
 Eternal, separate from fears :  
 The all-assuming months and years  
 Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
 And Spring that swells the narrow  
 brooks,

And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
 Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
 My old affection of the tomb,  
 And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,  
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak :

"Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
 A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore ;  
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;  
 But in dear words of human speech  
 We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain  
 The starry clearness of the free ?  
 How is it ? Canst thou feel for me  
 Some painless sympathy with pain ?"

And lightly does the whisper fall ;  
 "T is hard for thee to fathom this ;  
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
 And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;  
 Or so methinks the dead would say ;  
 Or so shall grief with symbols play,  
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
 That these things pass, and I shall prove  
 A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
 I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
 I could not, if I would, transfer  
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
 The promise of the golden hours ?  
 First love, first friendship, equal powers,  
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
 That beats within a lonely place,  
 That yet remembers his embrace,  
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
 Quite in the love of what is gone,  
 But seeks to beat in time with one  
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
 The primrose of the later year,  
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXVI.

SWEET after showers, ambrosial air,  
 That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
 Of evening over brake and bloom  
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare



The round of space, and rapt below  
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and  
Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odor streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

## LXXXVII.

I PAST beside the reverend walls  
In which of old I wore the gown ;  
I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes  
The storm their high-built organs make,  
And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophets blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
The measured pulse of racing oars  
Among the willows ; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
The same, but not the same ; and last  
Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :  
I linger'd ; all within was noise  
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
And labor, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string ;  
And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVIII.

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ  
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I — my harp would prelude woe —  
I cannot all command the strings ;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXIX.

WITCH-ELMS that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright ;  
And thou, with all thy breadth and  
height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling  
courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
 Or here she brought the harp and flung  
 A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
 And break the livelong summer day  
 With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
 Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
 Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
 Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
 He loved to rail against it still,  
 For "ground in yonder social mill  
 We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge" he said "in form and gloss  
 The picturesque of man and man."  
 We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,  
 The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
 And last, returning from afar,  
 Before the crimson-circled star  
 Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
 We heard behind the woodbine veil  
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
 And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

## XC.

HE tasted love with half his mind,  
 Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
 Where nighest heaven, who first could  
 fling  
 This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
 Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
 They would but find in child and wife  
 An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
 To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
 To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
 To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,  
 Behold their brides in other hands ;  
 The hard heir strides about their lands,  
 And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
 Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
 Confusion worse than death, and shake  
 The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
 Whatever change the years have  
 wrought,  
 I find not yet one lonely thought  
 That cries against my wish for thee.

## XCI.

WHEN rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
 And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
 Or underneath the barren bush  
 Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
 Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
 The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
 Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
 May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
 Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
 That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
 But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
 Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
 And like a finer light in light.

## XCII.

IF any vision should reveal  
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
 As but the canker of the brain ;  
 Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
 Together in the days behind,  
 I might but say, I hear a wind  
 Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
 A fact within the coming year ;  
 And tho' the months, revolving near,  
 Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
 But spiritual presentiments,  
 And such refraction of events  
 As often rises ere they rise.

## XCIII.

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say  
 No spirit ever brake the band

That stays him from the native land,  
Where first he walk'd when clasp't in  
clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in un conjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name;  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought  
would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
Imaginations calm and fair,  
The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,  
And doubt beside the portal waits,  
They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.

## XCV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
For underfoot the herb was dry;  
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:  
The brook alone far-off was heard,  
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd  
at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
Withdrew themselves from me and  
night,  
And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read  
Of that glad year which once had been,  
In those fall'n leaves which kept their  
green,  
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke  
The silent-speaking words, and strange  
Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
His living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time—the shocks of  
Chance—  
The blows of Death. At length my  
trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knolls once more where, couch'd at  
ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er

The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and  
swung

The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and  
death,

To broaden into boundless day.

xcvi.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue  
eyes

Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd  
strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the  
light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

xcvii.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees ;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd ;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —  
I look'd on these and thought of thee

In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away ;  
The days she never can forget  
Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
He reads the secret of the star,  
He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss :  
She knows not what his greatness is ;  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
She darkly feels him great and wise,  
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
"I cannot understand : I love."

xcviii.

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him ; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
That City. All her splendor seems  
No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants



Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
With statelier progress to and fro  
The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,  
He told me, lives in any crowd,  
When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
And wheels the circled dance, and  
breaks  
The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCIX.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
So loud with voices of the birds,  
So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast  
By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
A song that slights the coming care,  
And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
To myriads on the genial earth,  
Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,  
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.

## C.

I CLIMB the hill : from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnet trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill,  
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## CI.

UNWATCH'D, the garden bough shall sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,  
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the plain,  
At noon or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;  
Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape grow  
Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the laborer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CII.

WE leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky ;  
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, here thy boyhood sung  
 Long since its matin song, and heard  
 The low love-language of the bird  
 In native hazels tassel-hung.

The other answers, "Yea, but here  
 Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
 With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
 And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,  
 And each prefers his separate claim,  
 Poor rivals in a losing game,  
 That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set  
 To leave the pleasant fields and farms ;  
 They mix in one another's arms  
 To one pure image of regret.

## CIII.

ON that last night before we went  
 From out the doors where I was bred,  
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
 And maidens with me : distant hills  
 From hidden summits fed with rills  
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
 They sang of what is wise and good  
 And graceful. In the centre stood  
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
 The shape of him I loved, and love  
 For ever : then flew in a dove  
 And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go  
 They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
 To where a little shallop lay  
 At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,  
 And shadowing bluff that made the  
 banks,  
 We glided winding under ranks  
 Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,  
 And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
 The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
 And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
 And watch'd them, wax'd in every  
 limb ;  
 I felt the thews of Anakim,  
 The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,  
 And one would chant the history  
 Of that great race, which is to be,  
 And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
 Began to foam, and we to draw  
 From deep to deep, to where we saw  
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
 But thrice as large as man he bent  
 To greet us. Up the side I went,  
 And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
 Bewail'd their lot ; I did them wrong :  
 "We served thee here," they said, "so  
 long,  
 And wilt thou leave us now behind ?"

So rapt I was, they could not win  
 An answer from my lips, but he  
 Replying, "Enter likewise ye  
 And go with us" : they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
 A music out of sheet and shroud,  
 We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
 That landlike slept along the deep.

## CIV.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ ;  
 The moon is hid, the night is still ;  
 A single church below the hill  
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
 That wakens at this hour of rest  
 A single murmur in the breast,  
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
 In lands where not a memory strays,  
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
 But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CV.

TO-NIGHT, ungather'd, let us leave  
 This laurel, let this holly stand :  
 We live within the stranger's land,  
 And strangely falls our Christmas eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
 And silent under other snows :  
 There in due time the woodbine blows,  
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
 The genial hour with mask and mime ;  
 For change of place, like growth of  
 time,  
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
 A little spare the night I loved,  
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
 For who would keep an ancient form  
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;  
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown ;  
 No dance, no motion, save alone  
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;  
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
 The closing cycle rich in good.

## CVI.

RING out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
 The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
 The year is dying in the night ;  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
 The year is going, let him go ;  
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
 For those that here we see no more ;  
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
 And ancient forms of party strife ;  
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
 The faithless coldness of the times ;  
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
 The civic slander and the spite ;  
 Ring in the love of truth and right,  
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
 Ring out the darkness of the land,  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVII.

It is the day when he was born,  
 A bitter day that early sank  
 Behind a purple-frosty bank  
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
 The blast of North and East, and ice  
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
 Above the wood which grides and clangs  
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
 To darken on the rolling brine  
 That breaks the coast. But fetch the  
 wine,  
 Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
 To make a solid core of heat ;  
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
 Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

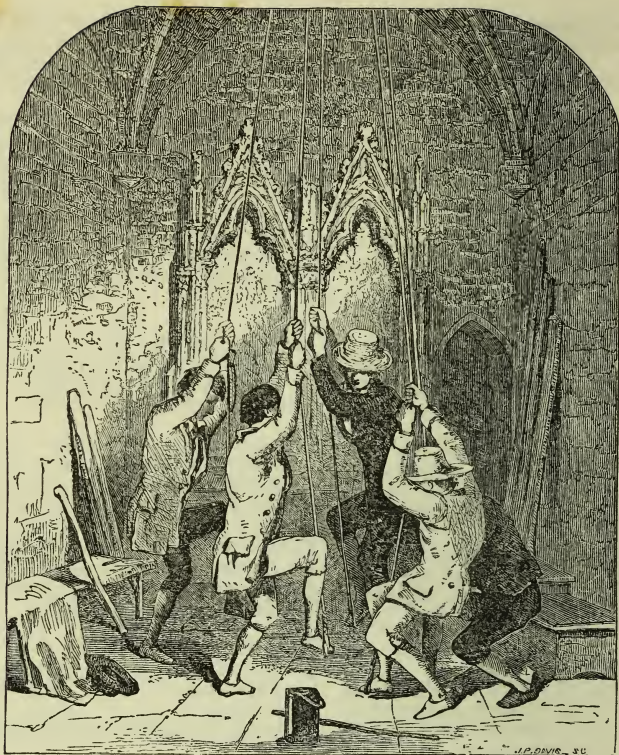
We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
 With books and music, surely we  
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVIII.

I WILL not shut me from my kind,  
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
 I will not eat my heart alone,  
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,  
 And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
 To scale the heaven's highest height,  
 Or dive below the wells of Death ?





"Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky."

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting  
hymns?

And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies :  
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX.

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry ;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man ;

Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England ; not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on : if they look'd in vain,



My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CX.

THY converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years :  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;  
And loved them more, that they were  
thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

## CXI.

THE churl in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
To him who grasps a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,  
'To whom a thousand memories call,  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
Each office of the social hour  
To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
Drew in the expression of an eye,  
Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman,  
Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXII.

HIGH wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd,  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXIII.

'T is held that sorrow makes us wise ;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with cries,  
And undulations to and fro.

## CXIV.

WHO loves not Knowledge ? Who shall  
rail  
Against her beauty ? May she mix

With men and prosper ! Who shall fix  
Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :

She sets her forward countenance  
And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —  
She cannot fight the fear of death.  
What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place ;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain ; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewst not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity.

#### CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now bourgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their sky  
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too ; and my regret

Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

#### CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colors of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone ;  
And that dear voice, I once have known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
For days of happy commune dead ;  
Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

#### CXVII.

O DAYS and hours, your work is this,  
To hold me from my proper place,  
A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue  
Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;  
And unto meeting when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
And every span of shade that steals,  
And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

#### CXVIII.

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,  
The giant laboring in his youth ;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to  
clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXIX.

DOORS, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more ; the city sleeps ;  
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-with-  
drawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland  
And bright the friendship of thine eye ;  
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXX.

I TRUST I have not wasted breath :  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with  
Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was born to other things.

## CXXI.

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun  
And ready, thou, to die with him,

Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

## CXXII.

O, WAST thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

## CXXIII.

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !  
There where the long street roars, hath  
been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true;  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIV.

THAT which we dare invoke to bless;  
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;  
He, They, One, All; within, without;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice "believe no more"  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:  
But that blind clamor made me wise;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## CXXV.

WHATEVER I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;  
She did but look through dimmer eyes;  
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song;  
And if the words were sweet and strong,  
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail  
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,

And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXVI.

LOVE is and was my Lord and King,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
Who moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVII.

AND all is well, tho' faith and form  
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;  
Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags:  
They tremble, the sustaining crags;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVIII.

THE love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade;  
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,



Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
 If all your office had to do  
 With old results that look like new ;  
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
 To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
 To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
 To cramp the student at his desk,  
 To make old bareness picturesque  
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
 On you and yours. I see in part  
 That all, as in some piece of art,  
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

## CXXIX.

DEAR friend, far off, my lost desire,  
 So far, so near in woe and weal ;  
 O loved the most, when most I feel  
 There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human, divine ;  
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye ;  
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be ;  
 Love deeper, darker understood ;  
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
 And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXX.

THY voice is on the rolling air ;  
 I hear thee where the waters run ;  
 Thou standest in the rising sun,  
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;  
 But tho' I seem in star and flower  
 To feel thee some diffusive power,  
 I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;  
 My love is vaster passion now ;  
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;  
 I have thee still, and I rejoice ;  
 I prosper, circled with thy voice ;  
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXXI.

O LIVING will that shalt endure  
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
 Rise in the spiritual rock,  
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
 A voice as unto him that hears,  
 A cry above the conquer'd years  
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
 The truths that never can be proved  
 Until we close with all we loved,  
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

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O TRUE and tried, so well and long,  
 Demand not thou a marriage lay ;  
 In that it is thy marriage day  
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
 Since first he told me that he loved  
 A daughter of our house ; nor proved  
 Since that dark day a day like this ;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
 Some thrice three years : they went  
 and came,  
 Remade the blood and changed the  
 frame,  
 And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm  
 In dying songs a dead regret,  
 But like a statue solid-set,  
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
 Than in the summers that are flown,  
 For I myself with these have grown  
 To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
 As echoes out of weaker times,  
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
 That must be made a wife ere noon ?  
 She enters, glowing like the moon  
 Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
 And then on thee ; they meet thy look

And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride ;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear :

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm,  
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The "wilt thou" answer'd, and again  
The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them — maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the  
grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd, and faces bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favor'd horses wait ;  
They rise, but linger ; it is late ;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the  
wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ; — till I retire :  
Dumb is that tower which spakesoloud,  
And high in heaven the streaming  
cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapor sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and  
spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall ;  
And breaking let the splendor fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge ; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

## MAUD,

### AND OTHER POEMS.

#### MAUD.

##### I.

##### I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the  
little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with  
blood-red heath,  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent  
horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her,  
answers "Death."

##### II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a  
body was found,  
His who had given me life — O father !  
O God ! was it well ? —  
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and  
dinted into the ground :  
There yet lies the rock that fell with him  
when he fell.

##### III.

Did he fling himself down ? who knows ?  
for a vast speculation had fail'd,  
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and  
ever wann'd with despair,  
And out he walk'd when the wind like  
a broken worldling wail'd,

And the flying gold of the ruin'd wood-  
lands drove thro' the air.

##### IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my  
hair were stirr'd  
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight  
trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
And my pulses closed their gates with a  
shock on my heart as I heard  
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide  
the shuddering night.

##### V.

Villany somewhere ! whose ? One says,  
we are villains all.  
Not he : his honest fame should at least  
by me be maintained :  
But that old man, now lord of the broad  
estate and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had  
left us flaccid and drain'd.

##### VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of  
Peace ? we have made them a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all  
that is not its own ;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain,  
is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in  
war on his own hearthstone ?





"I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood."

VII.

But these are the days of advance, the  
works of the men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in  
a tradesman's ware or his word?  
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think,  
and that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly bear-  
ing the sword.

VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take  
the print  
Of the golden age — why not? I have  
neither hope nor trust;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set  
my face as a flint,

Cheat and be cheated, and die: who  
knows? we are ashes and dust.

IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slur-  
ring the days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled  
together, each sex, like swine,  
When only the ledger lives, and when  
only not all men lie;  
Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a  
company forges the wine.

X.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in  
the ruffian's head,



Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell  
of the trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold  
to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the  
very means of life,

## XI.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the  
villanous centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of  
the moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a  
few last gasps, as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his  
crimson lights.

## XII.

When a Mammonite mother kills her  
babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of  
children's bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud  
war by land and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shak-  
ing a hundred thrones.

## XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yon-  
der round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from  
the three-decker out of the foam,  
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue  
would leap from his counter and  
till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with  
his cheating yardwand, home. —

## XIV.

What! am I raging alone as my father  
raged in his mood?  
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash  
myself down and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made,  
nevermore to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a  
wretched swindler's lie?

## XV.

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was  
*love* in the passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made  
false haste to the grave —

Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and  
thought he would rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God,  
as he used to rave.

## XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am  
sick of the moor and the main.  
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance  
ever come to me here?  
O, having the nerves of motion as well  
as the nerves of pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place  
and the pit and the fear?

## XVII.

Workmen up at the Hall! — they are  
coming back from abroad;  
The dark old place will be gilt by the  
touch of a millionaire:  
I have heard, I know not whence, of the  
singular beauty of Maud;  
I play'd with the girl when a child; she  
promised then to be fair.

## XVIII.

Maud with her venturous climbings and  
tumbles and childish escapes,  
Maud the delight of the village, the ring-  
ing joy of the Hall,  
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when  
my father dangled the grapes,  
Maud the beloved of my mother, the  
moon-faced darling of all, —

## XIX.

What is she now? My dreams are bad.  
She may bring me a curse.  
No, there is fatter game on the moor;  
she will let me alone.  
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether  
woman or man be the worse.  
I will bury myself in myself, and the  
Devil may pipe to his own.

## II.

LONG have I sigh'd for a calm: God  
grant I may find it at last!  
It will never be broken by Maud, she  
has neither savor nor salt,  
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found  
when her carriage past,  
Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her:  
where is the fault?

All that I saw (for her eyes were down-  
cast, not to be seen)  
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splen-  
didly null,  
Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more,  
if it had not been  
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an  
hour's defect of the rose,  
Or an underlip, you may call it a little  
too ripe, too full,  
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve  
in a sensitive nose,  
From which I escaped heart-free, with  
the least little touch of spleen.

## III.

COLD and clear-cut face, why come you  
so cruelly meek,  
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful  
folly was drown'd,  
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash  
dead on the cheek,  
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on  
a gloom profound ;  
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for  
a transient wrong  
Done but in thought to your beauty, and  
ever as pale as before  
Growing and fading and growing upon  
me without a sound,  
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike,  
half the night long  
Growing and fading and growing, till I  
could bear it no more,  
But arose, and all by myself in my own  
dark garden ground,  
Listening now to the tide in its broad-  
flung shipwrecking roar,  
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach  
dragg'd down by the wave,  
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly  
glimmer, and found  
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low  
in his grave.

## IV.

## I.

A MILLION emeralds break from the ruby-  
budded lime  
In the little grove where I sit—ah,  
wherefore cannot I be  
Like things of the season gay, like the  
bountiful season bland,

When the far-off sail is blown by the  
breeze of a softer clime,  
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a  
crescent of sea,  
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage  
ring of the land ?

## II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks  
how quiet and small !  
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with  
gossip, scandal, and spite ;  
And Jack on his alehouse bench has as  
many lies as a Czar ;  
And here on the landward side, by a red  
rock, glimmers the Hall ;  
And up in the high Hall-garden I see  
her pass like a light ;  
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be  
my leading star !

## III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the  
wrinkled head of the race ?  
I met her to-day with her brother, but  
not to her brother I bow'd :  
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by  
on the moor ;  
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd  
over her beautiful face.  
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe  
it, in being so proud ;  
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and  
I am nameless and poor.

## IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready  
to slander and steal ;  
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile,  
like a stoic, or like  
A wiser epicurean, and let the world  
have its way :  
For nature is one with rapine, a harm  
no preacher can heal ;  
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the  
sparrow spear'd by the shrike,  
And the whole little wood where I sit is  
a world of plunder and prey.

## V.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and  
Beauty fair in her flower ;  
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by  
an unseen hand at a game

That pushes us off from the board, and  
 others ever succeed ?  
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other  
 here for an hour ;  
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and  
 grin at a brother's shame ;  
 However we brave it out, we men are a  
 little breed.

## VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and  
 Master of Earth,  
 For him did his high sun flame, and his  
 river billowing ran,  
 And he felt himself in his force to be  
 Nature's crowning race.  
 As nine months go to the shaping an  
 infant ripe for his birth,  
 So many a million of ages have gone to  
 the making of man :  
 He now is first, but is he the last ? is he  
 not too base ?

## VII.

The man of science himself is fonder of  
 glory, and vain,  
 An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit  
 bounded and poor ;  
 The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd  
 into folly and vice.  
 I would not marvel at either, but keep  
 a temperate brain ;  
 For not to desire or admire, if a man  
 could learn it, were more  
 Than to walk all day like the sultan of  
 old in a garden of spice.

## VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an  
 Isis hid by the veil.  
 Who knows the ways of the world, how  
 God will bring them about ?  
 Our planet is one, the suns are many,  
 the world is wide.  
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall ? shall I  
 shriek if a Hungary fail ?  
 Or an infant civilization be ruled with  
 rod or with knout ?  
 I have not made the world, and He that  
 made it will guide.

## IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet  
 woodland ways,  
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passion-  
 less peace be my lot,

Far-off from the clamor of liars belied  
 in the hubbub of lies ;  
 From the long-neck'd geese of the world  
 that are ever hissing dispraise  
 Because their natures are little, and,  
 whether he heed it or not,  
 Where each man walks with his head in  
 a cloud of poisonous flies.

## X.

And most of all would I flee from the  
 cruel madness of love,  
 The honey of poison-flowers and all the  
 measureless ill.  
 Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are  
 all unmeet for a wife.  
 Your mother is mute in her grave as her  
 image in marble above ;  
 Your father is ever in London, you wan-  
 der about at your will ;  
 You have but fed on the roses, and lain  
 in the lilies of life.

## V.

## I.

A VOICE by the cedar tree,  
 In the meadow under the Hall !  
 She is singing an air that is known to me,  
 A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
 A martial song like a trumpet's call !  
 Singing alone in the morning of life,  
 In the happy morning of life and of May,  
 Singing of men that in battle array,  
 Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
 March with banner and bugle and fife  
 To the death, for their native land.

## II.

Maud with her exquisite face,  
 And wild voice pealing up to the sunny  
 sky,  
 And feet like sunny gems on an English  
 green,  
 Maud in the light of her youth and her  
 grace,  
 Singing of Death, and of Honor that  
 cannot die,  
 Till I well could weep for a time so sor-  
 did and mean,  
 And myself so languid and base.

## III.

Silence, beautiful voice  
 Be still, for you only trouble the mind

With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
 A glory I shall not find.  
 Still! I will hear you no more,  
 For your sweetness hardly leaves me a  
     choice  
 But to move to the meadow and fall  
     before  
 Her feet on the meadow grass, and  
     adore,  
 Not her, who is neither courtly nor  
     kind,  
 Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI.

## I.

MORNING arises stormy and pale,  
 No sun, but a wannish glare  
 In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
 And the budded peaks of the wood are  
     bow'd  
 Caught and cuff'd by the gale :  
 I had fancied it would be fair.

## II.

Whom but Maud should I meet  
 Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
 On the blossom'd gable-ends  
 At the head of the village street,  
 Whom but Maud should I meet ?  
 And she touch'd my hand with a smile  
     so sweet  
 She made me divine amends  
 For a courtesy not return'd.

## III.

And thus a delicate spark  
 Of glowing and growing light  
 Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
 Kept itself warm in the heart of my  
     dreams,  
 Ready to burst in a color'd flame :  
 Till at last when the morning came  
 In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
 But an ashen-gray delight.

## IV.

What if with her sunny hair,  
 And smile as sunny as cold,  
 She meant to weave me a snare  
 Of some coquettish deceit,  
 Cleopatra-like as of old  
 To entangle me when we met,

To have her lion roll in a silken net  
 And fawn at a victor's feet.

## V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
 Should Nature keep me alive,  
 If I find the world so bitter  
 When I am but twenty-five ?  
 Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
 And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
 Then the world were not so bitter  
 But a smile could make it sweet.

## VI.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
 Of a kind intent to me,  
 What if that dandy-despot, he,  
 That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
 That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
 Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
 Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
 Who wants the finer politic sense  
 To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
 With a glassy smile his brutal scorn —  
 What if he had told her yesternorn  
 How prettily for his own sweet sake  
 A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
 And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
 That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
 In another month to his brazen lies,  
 A wretched vote may be gain'd.

## VII.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
 Keep watch and ward, keep watch and  
     ward,  
 Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
 Yea too, myself from myself I guard,  
 For often a man's own angry pride  
 Is cap and bells for a fool.

## VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
 Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
 For am I not, am I not, here alone  
 So many a summer since she died,  
 My mother, who was so gentle and good ?  
 Living alone in an empty house,  
 Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
 Where I hear the dead at midday moan,  
 And the shrieking rush of the wainscot  
     mouse,  
 And my own sad name in corners cried,  
 When the shiver of dancing leaves is  
     thrown



About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
By that you swore to withstand ?  
For what was it else within me wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,  
That made my tongue so stammer and  
trip  
When I saw the treasured splendor, her  
hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip ?

## X.

I have play'd with her when a child ;  
She remembers it now we meet.  
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit.  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII.

## I.

DID I hear it half in a doze  
Long since, I know not where ?  
Did I dream it an hour ago,  
When asleep in this arm-chair ?

## II.

Men were drinking together,  
Drinking and talking of me ;  
" Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
Will have plenty : so let it be."

## III.

Is it an echo of something  
Read with a boy's delight,  
Viziers nodding together  
In some Arabian night ?

## IV.

Strange, that I hear two men,  
Somewhere, talking of me ;  
" Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
Will have plenty : so let it be."

## VIII.

SHE came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone ;  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone ;  
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own ;  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat  
stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer  
The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
Delicate-handed priest intone ;  
And thought, is it pride, and mused and  
sigh'd  
" No surely, now it cannot be pride."

## IX.

I WAS walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,  
The sun look'd out with a smile  
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,  
And riding at set of day  
Over the dark moor land,  
Rapidly riding far away,  
She waved to me with her hand.  
There were two at her side,  
Something flash'd in the sun,  
Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
In a moment they were gone :  
Like a sudden spark  
Struck vainly in the night,  
Then returns the dark  
With no more hope of light.

## X.

## I.

SICK, am I sick of a jealous dread ?  
Was not one of the two at her side  
This new-made lord, whose splendor  
plucks  
The slavish hat from the villager's head ?  
Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted  
mine  
Master of half a servile shire,  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,



"She came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone."

Strong in the power that all men adore,  
And simper and set their voices lower,  
And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
New as his title, built last year,  
There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

## II.

What, has he found my jewel out?  
For one of the two that rode at her side  
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:  
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a  
bride.

Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched  
race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

## III.

Last week came one to the county town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot kings,

Tho' the state has done it and thrice as  
well :

This broad - brimm'd hawker of holy  
things,

Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,  
and rings

Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
This huckster put down war ! can he tell  
Whether war be a cause or a consequence ?  
Put down the passions that make earth  
Hell !

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear ;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind.

#### IV.

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy !  
I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great wrong,  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

#### V.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat, — one  
Who can rule and dare not lie.

#### VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be !

#### XI.

##### I.

O LET the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet ;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

##### II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me

Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me ;  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day.

#### XII.

##### I.

BIRDS in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

##### II.

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

##### III.

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

##### IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately ;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

##### V.

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favor !  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

##### VI.

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd 'he meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

##### VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud,  
One is come to woo her.

##### VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

## XIII.

## I.

SCORN'D, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret ?  
That a calamity hard to be borne ?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride !  
I past him, I was crossing his lands ;  
He stood on the path a little aside ;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and  
white,

And six feet two, as I think, he stands ;  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

## II.

Who shall call me ungentele, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship ;  
But while I past he was humming an  
air,

Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonized me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

## III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?  
That old man never comes to his place :  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat ;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue ;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side ;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin :  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

## IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !  
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

## XIV.

## I.

MAUD has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn ;  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate ;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

## II.

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books,  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden-gate :  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as  
white

As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious  
ghost, to glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven,  
down to my side,  
There were but a step to be made.

## III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold ;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.

## IV.

I heard no sound where I stood  
But the rivulet on from the lawn  
Running down to my own dark wood ;  
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it  
swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;  
But I look'd, and round, all round the  
house I beheld  
The death-white curtain drawn ;  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain meant  
but sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool  
of the sleep of death.



## XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
 And I make myself such evil cheer;  
 That if I be dear to some one else,  
 Then some one else may have much  
 to fear;  
 But if I be dear to some one else,  
 Then I should be to myself more dear.  
 Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
 If I be dear,  
 If I be dear to some one else?

## XVI.

## I.

THIS lump of earth has left his estate  
 The lighter by the loss of his weight;  
 And so that he find what he went to  
 seek,  
 And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown  
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
 He may stay for a year who has gone for  
 a week:  
 But this is the day when I must speak,  
 And I see my Oread coming down,  
 O this is the day!  
 O beautiful creature, what am I  
 That I dare to look her way;  
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,  
 And dream of her beauty with tender  
 dread,  
 From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
 To the grace that, bright and light as  
 the crest  
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
 And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,  
 To know her beauty might half undo it.  
 I know it the one bright thing to save  
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from  
 crime,  
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## II.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool  
 lord,  
 Dare I bid her abide by her word?  
 Should I love her so well if she  
 Had given her word to a thing so low?  
 Shall I love her as well if she  
 Can break her word were it even for me?  
 I trust that it is not so.

## III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
 For I must tell her before we part,  
 I must tell her, or die.

## XVII.

Go not, happy day,  
 From the shining fields,  
 Go not, happy day,  
 Till the maiden yields.  
 Rosy is the West,  
 Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
 And a rose her mouth.  
 When the happy Yes  
 Falters from her lips,  
 Pass and blush the news  
 O'er the blowing ships.  
 Over blowing seas,  
 Over seas at rest,  
 Pass the happy news,  
 Blush it thro' the West;  
 Till the red man dance  
 By his red cedar tree,  
 And the red man's babe  
 Leap, beyond the sea.  
 Blush from West to East,  
 Blush from East to West,  
 Till the West is East,  
 Blush it thro' the West.  
 Rosy is the West,  
 Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
 And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII.

## I.

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only  
 friend.  
 There is none like her, none.  
 And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
 And sweetly, on and on  
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
 Full to the banks, close on the promised  
 good.

## II.

None like her, none.  
 Just now the dry-tongued laurels' patter-  
 ing talk  
 Seem'd her light foot along the garden  
 walk,

And shook my heart to think she comes  
once more ;  
But even then I heard her close the door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she  
is gone.

## III.

There is none like her, none.  
Nor will be when our summers have de-  
ceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy  
delicious East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here in-  
creased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my  
fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;  
And over whom thy darkness must have  
spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from  
whom she came.

## IV.

Here will I lie, while these long branches  
sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy  
day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be born  
To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand,  
Than nursed at ease and brought to un-  
derstand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and  
brand  
His nothingness into man.

## V.

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a  
pearl  
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one sim-  
ple girl.

## VI.

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death  
may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet  
to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## VII.

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal  
wrongs.  
O, why should Love, like men in drink-  
ing-songs,  
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of  
death ?  
Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long lover's  
kiss,  
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?  
"The dusky strand of Death inwoven  
here  
With dear Love's tie, makes Love him-  
self more dear."

## VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?  
And hark the clock within, the silver knell  
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal  
white,  
And died to live, long as my pulses play ;  
But now by this my love has closed her  
sight  
And given false death her hand, and  
stol'n away  
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies  
dwell  
Among the fragments of the golden day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace  
affright !  
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy  
spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart and ownest own  
farewell ;  
It is but for a little space I go :  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the  
glow  
Of your soft splendors that you look so  
bright ?

I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things  
     below,  
 Beat with my heart more blest than  
     heart can tell,  
 Blest, but forsome dark undercurrent woe  
 That seems to draw — but it shall not  
     be so :  
 Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

I.

HER brother is coming back to-night,  
 Breaking up my dream of delight.

II.

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?  
 I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
 O when did a morning shine  
 So rich in atonement as this  
 For my dark-dawning youth,  
 Darken'd watching a mother decline  
 And that dead man at her heart and mine :  
 For who was left to watch her but I ?  
 Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III.

I trust that I did not talk  
 To gentle Maud in our walk  
 (For often in lonely wanderings  
 I have cursed him even to lifeless things)  
 But I trust that I did not talk,  
 Not touch on her father's sin :  
 I am sure I did but speak  
 Of my mother's faded cheek  
 When it slowly grew so thin,  
 That I felt she was slowly dying  
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt :  
 For how often I caught her with eyes  
     all wet,  
 Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
 A world of trouble within !

IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
 To speak of the mother she loved  
 As one scarce less forlorn,  
 Dying abroad and it seems apart  
 From him who had ceased to share her  
     heart,  
 And ever mourning over the feud,  
 The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
 By which our houses are torn :  
 How strange was what she said,

When only Maud and the brother  
 Hung over her dying bed —  
 That Maud's dark father and mine  
 Had bound us one to the other,  
 Betrothed us over their wine,  
 On the day when Maud was born ;  
 Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.  
 Mine, mine by a right, from birth till  
     death,  
 Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn.

V.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
 To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
 That, if left uncancell'd, had been so  
     sweet :  
 And none of us thought of a something  
     beyond,  
 A desire that awoke in the heart of the  
     child,  
 As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
 To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled ;  
 And I was cursing them and my doom,  
 And letting a dangerous thought run wild  
 While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
 Of foreign churches — I see her there,  
 Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
 To be friends, to be reconciled !

VI.

But then what a flint is he !  
 Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
 I find whenever she touch'd on me  
 This brother had laugh'd her down,  
 And at last, when each came home,  
 He had darken'd into a frown,  
 Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
 To me, her friend of the years before ;  
 And this was what had reddened her cheek  
 When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
 To the faults of his heart and mind,  
 I see she cannot but love him,  
 And says he is rough but kind,  
 And wishes me to approve him,  
 And tells me, when she lay  
 Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
 That he left his wine and horses and play,  
 Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
 And tended her like a nurse.

VIII.

Kind ? but the deathbed desire  
 Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —

Rough but kind ? yet I know  
 He has plotted against me in this,  
 That he plots against me still.  
 Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.  
 Well, rough but kind ; why let it be so :  
 For shall not Maud have her will ?

## IX.

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
 As long as my life endures  
 I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
 That I never can hope to pay ;  
 And if ever I should forget  
 That I owe this debt to you  
 And for your sweet sake to yours ;  
 O then, what then shall I say ? —  
 If ever I *should* forget,  
 May God make me more wretched  
 Then ever I have been yet !

## X.

So now I have sworn to bury  
 All this dead body of hate,  
 I feel so free and so clear  
 By the loss of that dead weight,  
 That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
 Fantastically merry ;  
 But that her brother comes, like a blight  
 On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

## XX.

## I.

STRANGE, that I felt so gay,  
 Strange that I tried to-day  
 To beguile her melancholy ;  
 The Sultan, as we name him, —  
 She did not wish to blame him —  
 But he vexed her and perplexed her  
 With his worldly talk and folly :  
 Was it gentle to reprove her  
 For stealing out of view  
 From a little lazy lover  
 Who but claims her as his due ?  
 Or for chilling his caresses  
 By the coldness of her manners,  
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?  
 Now I know her but in two,  
 Nor can pronounce upon it  
 If one should ask me whether  
 The habit, hat, and feather,  
 Or the frock and gypsy bonnet  
 Be the neater and completer ;  
 For nothing can be sweeter  
 Than maiden Maud in either.

## II.

But to-morrow, if we live,  
 Our ponderous squire will give  
 A grand political dinner  
 To half the squirelings near ;  
 And Maud will wear her jewels,  
 And the bird of prey will hover,  
 And the titmouse hope to win her  
 With his chirrup at her ear.

## III.

A grand political dinner  
 To the men of many acres,  
 A gathering of the Tory,  
 A dinner and then a dance  
 For the maids and marriage-makers,  
 And every eye but mine will glance  
 At Maud in all her glory.

## IV.

For I am not invited,  
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
 I am all as well delighted,  
 For I know her own rose-garden,  
 And mean to linger in it  
 Till the dancing will be over ;  
 And then, O then, come out to me  
 For a minute, but for a minute,  
 Come out to your own true lover,  
 That your true lover may see  
 Your glory also, and render  
 All homage to his own darling,  
 Queen Maud in all her splendor.

## XXI.

RIVULET crossing my ground,  
 And bringing me down from the Hall  
 This garden-rose that I found,  
 Forgetful of Maud and me,  
 And lost in trouble and moving round  
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
 And trying to pass to the sea ;  
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
 My Maud has sent it by thee  
 (If I read her sweet will right)  
 On a blushing mission to me,  
 Saying in odor and color, "Ah, be  
 Among the roses to-night."

## XXII.

## I.

COME into the garden, Maud,  
 For the black bat, night, has flown,





"Come into the garden, Maud."

Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone ;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted  
abroad,  
And the musk of the roses blown.

II.

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she  
loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die.

III.

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon ;  
All night has the casement jessamine  
stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.

IV.

I said to the lily, "There is but one  
With whom she has heart to be gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone ?  
She is weary of dance and play."  
Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day ;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

V.

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
For one that will never be thine ?  
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the  
rose,  
"For ever and ever, mine."

VI.

And the soul of the rose went into my  
blood,  
As the music clash'd in the hall ;

And long by the garden lake I stood,  
 For I heard your rivulet fall  
 From the lake to the meadow and on to  
 the wood,  
 Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

## VII.

From the meadow your walks have left  
 so sweet  
 That whenever a March-wind sighs  
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
 In violets blue as your eyes,  
 To the woody hollows in which we meet  
 And the valleys of Paradise.

## VIII.

The slender acacia would not shake  
 One long milk-bloom on the tree ;  
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake  
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;  
 But the rose was awake all night for your  
 sake,  
 Knowing your promise to me ;  
 The lilies and roses were all awake,  
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## IX.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
 Come hither, the dances are done,  
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
 Queen lily and rose in one ;  
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with  
 curls,  
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

## X.

There has fallen a splendid tear  
 From the passion-flower at the gate.  
 She is coming, my dove, my dear ;  
 She is coming, my life, my fate ;  
 The red rose cries, "She is near, she is  
 near" ;  
 And the white rose weeps, "She is  
 late" ;  
 The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear" ;  
 And the lily whispers, "I wait."

## XI.

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
 My dust would hear her and beat,  
 Had I lain for a century dead ;  
 Would start and tremble under her feet,  
 And blossom in purple and red.

## XXIII.

## I.

"THE fault was mine, the fault was  
 mine" —

Whyam I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the  
 hill ? —

It is this guilty hand ! —

And there rises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath in the darkening land —  
 What is it, that has been done ?  
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising  
 sun,

The fires of Hell and of Hate ;

For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a  
 word,

When her brother ran in his rage to the  
 gate,

He came with the babe-faced lord ;  
 Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
 And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,  
 He fiercely gave me the lie,  
 Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
 And he struck me, madman, over the face,  
 Struck me before the languid fool,  
 Who was gaping and grinning by :  
 Struck for himself an evil stroke ;  
 Wrought for his house an irredeemable  
 woe ;

For front to front in an hour we stood,  
 And a million horrible bellowing echoes  
 broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the  
 wood,

And thunder'd up into Heaven the  
 Christless code,

That must have life for a blow.

Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?

"The fault was mine," he whisper'd,  
 "fly !"

Then glided out of the joyous wood  
 The ghastly Wraith of one that I know ;  
 And there rang on a sudden a passionate  
 cry,

A cry for a brother's blood :

It will ring in my heart and my ears, till  
 I die, till I die.

## II.

Is it gone ? my pulses beat —  
 What was it ? a lying trick of the brain ?  
 Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
 A shadow there at my feet,  
 High over the shadowy land.

It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a  
gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown with  
deluging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and  
lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to  
forgive :  
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold  
Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of ven-  
omous worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust ;  
We are not worthy to live.

## XXIV.

## I.

SEE what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design !

## II.

What is it ? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world ?

## IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand !

## V.

Breton, not Briton ; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear —  
Plagued with a fitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main —  
Why should it look like Maud ?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain ?

## VI.

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost ;  
An old song vexes my ear ;  
But that of Lamech is mine.

## VII.

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part —  
But she, she would love me still ;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

## VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye, —  
That it should, by being so overwrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by !  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings  
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought  
It is his mother's hair.

## IX.

Who knows if he be dead ?  
Whether I need have fled ?  
Am I guilty of blood ?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,  
While I am over the sea !



Let me and my passionate love go by,  
 But speak to her all things holy and  
                   high,  
 Whatever happen to me !  
 Me and my harmful love go by ;  
 But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
 Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,  
 And comfort her tho' I die.

## XXV.

COURAGE, poor heart of stone !  
 I will not ask thee why  
 Thou canst not understand  
 That thou art left for ever alone : -  
 Courage, poor stupid heart of stone. —  
 Or if I ask thee why,  
 Care not thou to reply :  
 She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
 When thou shalt more than die.

## XXVI.

## I.

O THAT 't were possible  
 After long grief and pain  
 To find the arms of my true love  
 Round me once again !

## II.

When I was wont to meet her  
 In the silent woody places  
 By the home that gave me birth,  
 We stood tranced in long embraces  
 Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
 Than anything on earth.

## III.

A shadow flits before me,  
 Not thou, but like to thee ;  
 Ah Christ, that it were possible  
 For one short hour to see  
 The souls we loved, that they might tell  
                   us  
 What and where they be.

## IV.

It leads me forth at evening,  
 It lightly winds and steals  
 In a cold white robe before me,  
 When all my spirit reels  
 At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
 And the roaring of the wheels.

## V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
 Half in dreams I sorrow after  
 The delight of early skies ;  
 In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
 For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
 For the meeting of the morrow,  
 The delight of happy laughter,  
 The delight of low replies.

## VI.

'T is a morning pure and sweet,  
 And a dewy splendor falls  
 On the little flower that clings  
 To the turrets and the walls ;  
 'T is a morning pure and sweet,  
 And the light and shadow fleet ;  
 She is walking in the meadow,  
 And the woodland echo rings ;  
 In a moment we shall meet ;  
 She is singing in the meadow,  
 And the rivulet at her feet  
 Ripples on in light and shadow  
 To the ballad that she sings.

## VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
 My bird with the shining head,  
 My own dove with the tender eye ?  
 But there rings on a sudden a passionate  
                   cry,  
 There is some one dying or dead,  
 And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;  
 For a tumult shakes the city,  
 And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
 In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
 Without knowledge, without pity,  
 By the curtains of my bed  
 That abiding phantom cold.

## VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
 Mix not memory with doubt,  
 Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
 Pass and cease to move about !  
 'T is the blot upon the brain  
 That *will* show itself without.

## IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
 And the yellow vapors choke  
 The great city sounding wide ;  
 The day comes, a dull red ball  
 Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
 On the misty river-tide.



## X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
 I steal, a wasted frame,  
 It crosses here, it crosses there,  
 Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
 The shadow still the same ;  
 And on my heavy eyelids  
 My anguish hangs like shame.

## XI.

Alas for her that met me,  
 That heard me softly call,  
 Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
 At the quiet evenfall,  
 In the garden by the turrets  
 Of the old manorial hall.

## XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,  
 From the realms of light and song,  
 In the chamber or the street,  
 As she looks among the blest,  
 Should I fear to greet my friend  
 Or to say "forgive the wrong,"  
 Or to ask her, "take me, sweet,  
 To the regions of thy rest" ?

## XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,  
 And the shadow flits and fleets  
 And will not let me be ;  
 And I loathe the squares and streets,  
 And the faces that one meets,  
 Hearts with no love for me :  
 Always I long to creep  
 Into some still cavern deep,  
 There to weep, and weep, and weep  
 My whole soul out to thee.

## XXVII.

## I.

DEAD, long dead,  
 Long dead !  
 And my heart is a handful of dust,  
 And the wheels go over my head,  
 And my bones are shaken with pain,  
 For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
 Only a yard beneath the street,  
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
 The hoofs of the horses beat,  
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
 With never an end to the stream of  
 passing feet,  
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,

Clamor and rumble, and ringing and  
 clatter,  
 And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace, but  
 it is not so ;  
 To have no peace in the grave, is that  
 not sad ?  
 But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go ;  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad.

## II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
 They cannot even bury a man ;  
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the days  
 that are gone,  
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read ;  
 It is that which makes us loud in the  
 world of the dead ;  
 There is none that does his work, not  
 one ;  
 A touch of their office might have sufficed,  
 But the churchmen fain would kill their  
 church,  
 As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

## III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
 No limit to his distress ;  
 And another, a lord of all things, praying  
 To his own great self, as I guess ;  
 And another, a statesman there, betraying  
 His party-secret, fool, to the press ;  
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
 The case of his patient — all for what ?  
 To tickle the maggot born in an empty  
 head,  
 And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
 For it is but a world of the dead.

## IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
 For the prophecy given of old  
 And then not understood,  
 Has come to pass as foretold ;  
 Not let any man think for the public  
 good,  
 But babble, merely for babble.  
 For I never whisper'd a private affair  
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
 No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
 But I heard it shouted at once from the  
 top of the house ;  
 Everything came to be known :  
 Who told *him* we were there ?

## V.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back  
 From the wilderness, full of wolves,  
 where he used to lie ;  
 He has gather'd the bones for his o'er-  
 grown whelp to crack ;  
 Crack them now for yourself, and howl,  
 and die.

## VI.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;  
 I know not whether he came in the  
 Hanover ship,  
 But I know that he lies and listens mute  
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and  
 holes :  
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
 Except that now we poison our babes,  
 poor souls !  
 It is all used up for that.

## VII.

Tell him now : she is standing here at  
 my head ;  
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ;  
 He may take her now ; for she never  
 speaks her mind,  
 But is ever the one thing silent here.  
 She is not of us, as I divine ;  
 She comes from another stiller world of  
 the dead,  
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,  
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
 All made up of the lily and rose  
 That blow by night, when the season is  
 good,  
 To the sound of dancing music and flutes :  
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but  
 blood ;  
 For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
 He linkt a dead man there to a spectral  
 bride ;  
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of  
 brutes,  
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

## IX.

But what will the old man say ?  
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy day ;

Yet now I could even weep to think of it ;  
 For what will the old man say  
 When he comes to the second corpse in  
 the pit ?

## X.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
 Then to strike him and lay him low,  
 That were a public merit, far,  
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;  
 But the red life spilt for a private blow —  
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
 Are scarcely even akin.

## XI.

O me, why have they not buried me deep  
 enough ?  
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so  
 rough,  
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?  
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;  
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;  
 I will cry to the steps above my head,  
 And somebody, surely, some kind heart  
 will come  
 To bury me, bury me  
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## XXVIII.

## I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror  
 and fear,  
 That I come to be grateful at last for a  
 little thing :  
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a time  
 of year  
 When the face of night is fair on the  
 dewy downs,  
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the  
 Charioteer  
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious  
 crowns  
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
 That like a silent lightning under the stars  
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a  
 band of the blest,  
 And spoke of a hope for the world in the  
 coming wars —  
 " And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble  
 have rest,  
 Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed  
 to Mars  
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the  
 Lion's breast.

## II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a  
 dear delight  
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, up-  
 on eyes so fair,  
 That had been in a weary world my one  
 thing bright ;  
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd  
 my despair  
 When I thought that a war would arise  
 in defence of the right,  
 That an iron tyranny now should bend  
 or cease,  
 The glory of manhood stand on his an-  
 cient height,  
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the mil-  
 lionnaire :  
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and  
 Peace  
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd  
 increase,  
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful  
 shore,  
 And the cobweb woven across the can-  
 non's throat  
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind  
 no more.

## III.

And as months ran on and rumor of  
 battle grew,  
 "It is time, it is time, O passionate  
 heart," said I  
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be  
 pure and true),  
 "It is time, O passionate heart and  
 morbid eye,  
 That old hysterical mock-disease should  
 die."  
 And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd  
 my breath  
 With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas  
 of death.

## IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher  
 aims  
 Of a land that has lost for a little her  
 lust of gold,  
 And love of a peace that was full of  
 wrongs and shames,  
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be  
 told ;

And hail once more to the banner of bat-  
 tle unroll'd !  
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many  
 shall weep  
 For those that are crush'd in the clash  
 of jarring claims,  
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on  
 a giant liar ;  
 And many a darkness into the light shall  
 leap,  
 And shine in the sudden making of splen-  
 did names,  
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
 And the heart of a people beat with one  
 desire ;  
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is  
 over and done,  
 And now by the side of the Black and  
 the Baltic deep,  
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the for-  
 tress, flames  
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart  
 of fire.

## V.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll  
 down like a wind,  
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause,  
 we are noble still,  
 And myself have awaked, as it seems,  
 to the better mind ;  
 It is better to fight for the good, than to  
 rail at the ill ;  
 I have felt with my native land, I am  
 one with my kind,  
 I embrace the purpose of God and the  
 doom assign'd.

## THE BROOK ;

## AN IDYL.

"HERE, by this brook, we parted ; I to  
 the East  
 And he for Italy — too late — too late :  
 One whom the strong sons of the world  
 despise ;  
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and  
 share,  
 And mellow metres more than cent for  
 cent ;  
 Nor could he understand how money  
 breeds,  
 Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself  
 could make  
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.

O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks  
 we say,  
 Of those that held their heads above the  
 crowd,  
 They flourish'd then or then ; but life in  
 him  
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only  
 touch'd

On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
 When all the wood stands in a mist of  
 green,  
 And nothing perfect : yet the brook he  
 loved,  
 For which, in branding summers of  
 Bengal,

Orev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry  
 air

I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
 To me that loved him ; for 'O brook,'  
 he says,

'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in  
 his rhyme,

'Whence come you?' and the brook,  
 why not ? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
 I make a sudden sally  
 And sparkle out among the fern,  
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
 Or slip between the ridges,  
 By twenty thorps, a little town,  
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

"Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite  
 worn out,  
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley  
 bridge,  
 It has more ivy ; there the river ; and there  
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and  
 river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
 In little sharps and trebles,  
 I bubble into eddying bays,  
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
 By many a field and fallow,

And many a fairy foreland set  
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

"But Philip chatter'd more than brook  
 or bird ;  
 Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught  
 His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
 High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer  
 grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
 With here a blossom sailing,  
 And here and there a lusty trout,  
 And here and there a grayling,

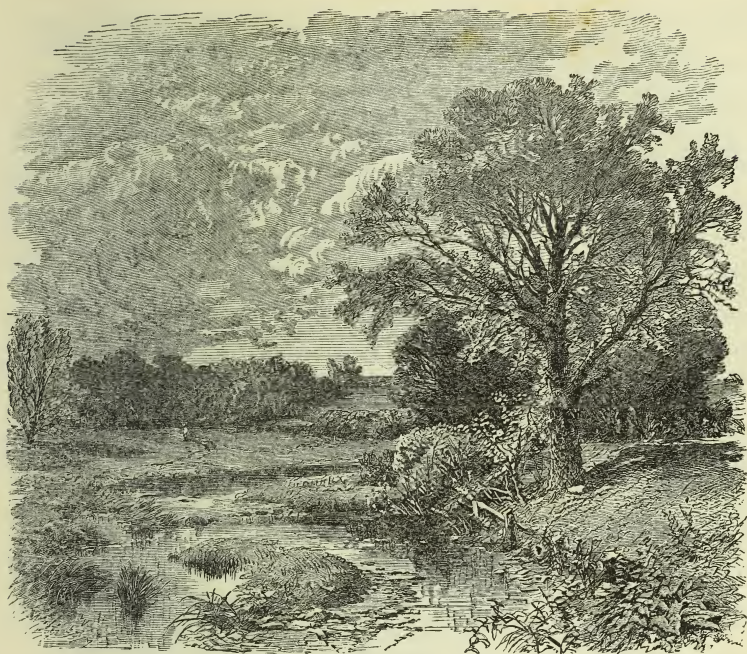
And here and there a foamy flake  
 Upon me, as I travel  
 With many a silvery waterbreak  
 Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

"O darling Katie Willows, his one  
 child !  
 A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;  
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;  
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ;  
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
 shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit  
 within.

"Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
 Her and her far-off cousin and be-  
 trothed,  
 James Willows, of one name and heart  
 with her.  
 For here I came, twenty years back —  
 the week  
 Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost  
 By that old bridge which, half in ruins  
 then,  
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
 Beyond it, where the waters marry —  
 crost,  
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
 And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The  
 gate,





"I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally  
And sparkle out among the fern."

Half-parted from a weak and scolding  
hinge,  
Stuck; and he clamor'd from a case-  
ment, 'run'  
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
'Run, Katie!' Katie never ran: she  
moved  
To meet me, winding under woodbine  
bowers,  
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

"What was it? less of sentiment than  
sense  
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive  
tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philan-  
thropies,  
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the  
Deed.

"She told me. She and James had  
quarrell'd. Why?  
What cause of quarrel? None, she said,  
no cause;  
James had no cause: but when I prest  
the cause,  
I learnt that James had flickering jeal-  
ousies  
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James?  
I said.  
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from  
mine,  
And sketching with her slender pointed  
foot  
Some figure like a wizard's pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass  
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I  
ask'd  
If James were coming. 'Coming every day,'  
She answer'd, 'ever longing to explain,  
But evermore her father came across

With some long-winded tale, and broke  
him short;  
And James departed vext with him and  
her.'

How could I help her? 'Would I — was  
it wrong?'

(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she  
spoke)

'O would I take her father for one hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to  
me!'

And even while she spoke, I saw where  
James

Made toward us, like a wader in the  
surf,

Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-  
sweet.

"O Katie, what I suffer'd for yoursake!  
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out  
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:  
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling  
lanes

Of his wheat suburb, babbling as he went.  
He praised his land, his horses, his  
machines;

He praised his ploughs, his cows, his  
hogs, his dogs;

He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-  
hens;

His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own de-  
serts:

Then from the plaintive mother's teat he  
took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, nam-  
ing each,

And naming those, his friends, for whom  
they were:

Then crost the common into Darnley  
chase

To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and  
fern

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:  
'That was the four-year-old I sold the  
Squire.'

And there he told a long long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at  
grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter  
wish'd,

And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price  
he ask'd,

And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,  
But he stood firm; and so the matter  
hung;

He gave them line: and five days after  
that

He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer'd some-  
thing more,

But he stood firm; and so the matter  
hung;

He knew the man; the colt would fetch  
its price;

He gave them line: and how by chance  
at last

(It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)

He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew him  
in,

And there he mellow'd all his heart with  
ale,

Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of  
haven, he,

Poor fellow, could he help it? recom-  
menced,

And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the  
Jilt,

Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,

And with me Philip, talking still; and so  
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling  
sun,

And following our own shadows thrice as  
long

As when they follow'd us from Philip's  
door,

Arrived, and found the sun of sweet con-  
tent

Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things  
well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,

I slide by hazel covers;

I move the sweet forget-me-nots

That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,

Among my skimming swallows;

I make the netted sunbeam dance

Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars

In brambly wildernesses;





"I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows."

I linger by my shingly bars ;  
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these  
are gone,  
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund,  
sleeps,  
Not by the well-known stream and rustic  
spire,  
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of  
words  
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :  
I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas

Far off, and holds her head to other  
stars,  
And breathes in converse seasons. All  
are gone."

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the  
brook  
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a  
low breath  
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony  
rings ;  
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden  
near,  
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit within :  
Then, wondering, ask'd her "Are you  
from the farm?"

"Yes" answer'd she. "Pray stay a  
little: pardon me;

What do they call you?" "Katie."

"That were strange.

What surname?" "Willows." "No!"

"That is my name."

"Indeed!" and here he look'd so self-  
perplext,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd,  
till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in  
his dream.

Then looking at her; "Too happy, fresh  
and fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best  
bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore your  
name

About these meadows, twenty years ago."

"Have you not heard?" said Katie,  
"we came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
Am I so like her? so they said on board.  
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
My mother, as it seems you did, the  
days

That most she loves to talk of, come with  
me.

My brother James is in the harvest-field :  
But she—you will be welcome—O,  
come in!"

## THE LETTERS.

### I.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,

A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,

I peer'd athwart the chancel pane

And saw the altar cold and bare.

A clog of lead was round my feet,

A band of pain across my brow;

"Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
Before you hear my marriage vow."

### II.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song

That mock'd the wholesome human  
heart,

And then we met in wrath and wrong,

We met, but only meant to part.

Full cold my greeting was and dry ;  
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;  
I saw with half-unconscious eye  
She wore the colors I approved.

### III.

She took the little ivory chest,

With half a sigh she turn'd the key,

Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
And gave my letters back to me.

And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could  
please ;

As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

### IV.

She told me all her friends had said ;

I raged against the public liar ;

She talk'd as if her love were dead,

But in my words were seeds of fire.

"No more of love ; your sex is known :

I never will be twice deceived.

Henceforth I trust the man alone,

The woman cannot be believed.

### V.

"Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell

(And women's slander is the worst),

And you, whom once I loved so well,

Thro' you, my life will be accurst."

I spoke with heart, and heat and force,

I shook her breast with vague alarms—

Like torrents from a mountain source

We rush'd into each other's arms.

### VI.

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,

And sweet the vapor-braided blue,

Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,

As homeward by the church I drew.

The very graves appear'd to smile,

So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;

"Dark porch," I said, "and silent aisle,

There comes a sound of marriage bells."

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

### I.

BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,

Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a  
mighty nation,



Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

## II.

Where shall we lay the man whom we  
deplore ?

Here, in streaming London's central roar.  
Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore.

## III.

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,  
And let the mournful martial music blow ;  
The last great Englishman is low.

## IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.  
No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring  
blood,

The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,

Whole in himself, a common good.  
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.

O good gray head which all men knew,  
O voice from which their omens all men  
drew,

O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds  
that blew !

Such was he whom we deplore.  
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
The great World-victor's victor will be  
seen no more.

## V.

All is over and done :  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
England, for thy son.  
Let the bell be toll'd.

Render thanks to the Giver,  
And render him to the mould.  
Under the cross of gold  
That shines over city and river,  
There he shall rest for ever  
Among the wise and the bold.  
Let the bell be toll'd :  
And a reverent people behold  
The towering car, the sable steeds :  
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,  
Dark in its funeral fold.  
Let the bell be toll'd :  
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;  
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem  
roll'd

Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;  
And the volleying cannon thunder his  
loss ;

He knew their voices of old.  
For many a time in many a clime  
His captain's-ear has heard them boom  
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :  
When he with those deep voices wrought,  
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;  
With those deep voices our dead cap-  
tain taught

The tyrant, and asserts his claim  
In that dread sound to the great name,  
Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
In praise and in dispraise the same,  
A man of well-temper'd frame.  
O civic muse, to such a name,  
To such a name for ages long,  
To such a name,  
Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

## VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd  
guest,

With banner and with music, with sol-  
dier and with priest,  
With a nation weeping, and breaking  
on my rest ?

Mighty Seaman, this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea.  
Thine island loves thee well, thou fa-  
mous man,

The greatest sailor since our world began.  
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
To thee the greatest soldier comes ;  
For this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea ;  
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;  
O give him welcome, this is he  
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
And worthy to be laid by thee ;

For this is England's greatest son,  
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
 Nor ever lost an English gun ;  
 This is he that far away  
 Against the myriads of Assaye  
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;  
 And underneath another sun,  
 Warring on a later day,  
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
 The treble works, the vast designs  
 Of his labor'd rampart-lines,  
 Where he greatly stood at bay,  
 Whence he issued forth anew,  
 And ever great and greater grew,  
 Beating from the wasted vines  
 Back to France her banded swarms,  
 Back to France with countless blows,  
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
 Follow'd up in valley and glen  
 With blare of bugle, clamor of men,  
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
 And England pouring on her foes.  
 Such a war had such a close.  
 Again their ravening eagle rose  
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing  
 wings,

And barking for the thrones of kings ;  
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
 On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler  
 down ;

A day of onsets of despair !  
 Dash'd on every rocky square  
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves  
 away ;

Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;  
 Thro' the long-tormented air  
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
 And down we swept and charged and  
 overthrew.

So great a soldier taught us there,  
 What long-enduring hearts could do  
 In that world's-earthquake, Waterloo !  
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
 If aught of things that here befall  
 Touch a spirit among things divine,  
 If love of country move thee there at all,  
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by  
 thine !

And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
 In full acclaim,  
 A people's voice,  
 The proof and echo of all human fame,  
 A people's voice, when they rejoice

At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 Attest their great commander's claim  
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,  
 Eternal honor to his name.

## VII.

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.  
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams  
 forget,  
 Confused by brainless mobs and lawless  
 Powers ;  
 Thank Him who isled us here, and  
 roughly set  
 His Briton in blown seas and storming  
 showers,  
 We have a voice, with which to pay the  
 debt  
 Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
 To those great men who fought, and kept  
 it ours,  
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute con-  
 trol ;  
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,  
 the soul  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
 And save the one true seed of freedom  
 sown

Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which there  
 springs

Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;  
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march  
 of mind,

Till crowds at length be sane and crowns  
 be just.

But wink no more in slothful overtrust.  
 Remember him who led your hosts ;  
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward  
 wall ;

His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever ; and whatever tempests lower  
 For ever silent ; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent ; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man who  
 spoke ;

Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumor  
 flow

Thro' either babbling world of high and  
 low ;

Whose life was work, whose language rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life ;  
 Who never spoke against a foe ;

Whose eighty winters freeze with one re-  
buke

All great self-seekers trampling on the  
right :

Truth-teller was our England's Alfred  
named ;

Truth-lover was our English Duke ;

Whatever record leap to light

He never shall be shamed.

## VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
He, on whom from both her open hands  
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,  
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
Yea, let all good things await  
Him who cares not to be great,  
But as he saves or serves the state.  
Not once or twice in our rough island-  
story,

The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He that walks it, only thirsting  
For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
Into glossy purples, which outredden  
All voluptuous garden-roses.

Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has  
won

His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty  
scaled

Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and  
sun.

Such was he : his work is done,  
But while the races of mankind endure,  
Let his great example stand  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman  
pure :

Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
The path of duty be the way to glory :  
And let the land whose hearths he saved  
from shame

For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,  
Eternal honor to his name.

## IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see :  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung :  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one, upon whose hand and heart and  
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.  
Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity.  
Whom we see not we revere,  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,  
And brawling memories all too free  
For such a wise humility  
As befits a solemn fane :  
We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.  
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will ;  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll  
Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul ?  
On God and Godlike men we build our  
trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the peo-  
ple's ears :

The dark crowd moves, and there are  
sobs and tears :

The black earth yawns : the mortal dis-  
appears ;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;  
He is gone who seem'd so great. —  
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave him.  
Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him.  
God accept him, Christ receive him.

## THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine  
In lands of palm and southern pine ;  
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road ;  
How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;  
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
Yet present in his natal grove,  
Now watching high on mountain  
cornice,  
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;  
But distant color, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green ;  
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;  
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours ;  
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain ;  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the  
glory !  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flushed, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como ; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded ; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burden music, kept,  
As on The Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
One tall Agave above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splügen drew,  
But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.  
O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea ;



So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold :

Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nursing of another sky

Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,

The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,

Perchance, to dream you still beside me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

#### TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
God-father, come and see your boy :

Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
Should eighty-thousand college-councils

Thunder "Anathema," friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right,

Yet one lay-hearth would give you  
welcome

(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown

All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,

And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand ;

And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a breaker on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,

And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin ;

Dispute the claims, arrange the  
chances ;

Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;

Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;

How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;

But when the wreath of March has  
blossom'd,

Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear ;

Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

#### WILL.

##### I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !

He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;

He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :

For him nor moves the loud world's ran-  
dom mock,

Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,

Who seems a promontory of rock,

That, compass'd round with turbulent  
sound,

In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
Tempest-buffed, citadel-crown'd.

##### II.

But ill for him who, bettering not with  
time,

Corrupts the strength of heaven-de-  
scended Will,

And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,

Or seeming-genial venial fault,

Recurring and suggesting still !

He seems as one whose footsteps halt,

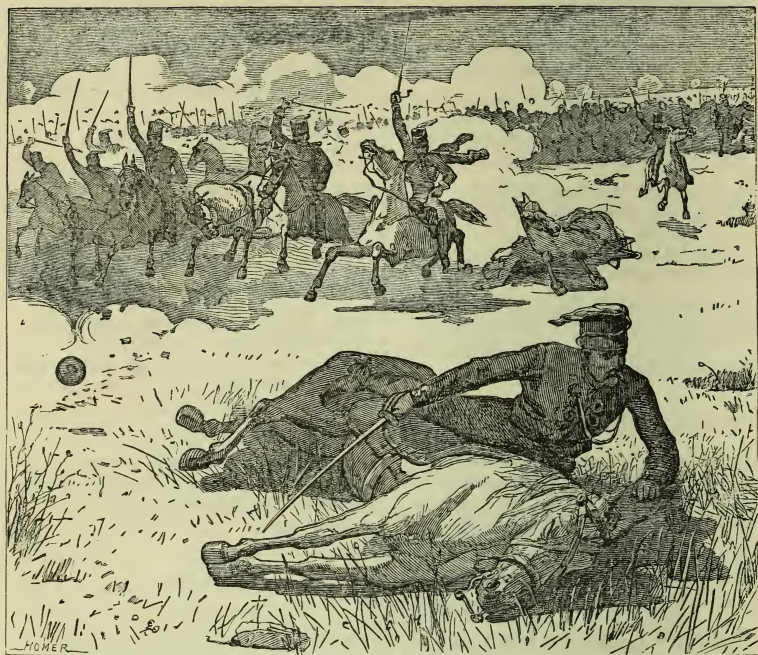
Toiling in immeasurable sand,

And o'er a weary, sultry land,

Far beneath a blazing vault,

Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,

The city sparkles like a grain of salt.



"O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wondered.

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

### I.

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
"Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!" he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

### II.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"  
Was there a man dismay'd?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd:  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

### III.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

### IV.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while

All the world wonder'd :  
Plunged in the battery-smoke,  
Right thro' the line they broke ;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not  
Not the six hundred.

V.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,

While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

VI.

When can their glory fade ?  
O the wild charge they made !  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honor the charge they made !  
Honor the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred !

## ENOCH ARDEN,

### AND OTHER POEMS.

#### ENOCH ARDEN.

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a  
chasm ;  
And in the chasm are foam and yellow  
sands ;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf  
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ;  
and higher  
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd  
mill ;  
And high in heaven behind it a gray down  
With Danish barrows ; and a hazelwood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,  
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,  
play'd  
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,  
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-  
nets,  
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-  
drawn ;  
And built their castles of dissolving sand  
To watch them overflow'd, or following  
up  
And flying the white breaker, daily left  
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff :  
In this the children play'd at keeping  
house.  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,  
While Annie still was mistress ; but at  
times  
Enoch would hold possession for a week :  
" This is my house and this my little wife."  
" Mine too " said Philip " turn and turn  
about " :  
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stron-  
ger-made  
Was master : then would Philip, his  
blue eyes  
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,  
Shriek out " I hate you, Enoch," and at  
this  
The little wife would weep for company,  
And pray them not to quarrel for hersake,  
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood  
past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascending  
sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
On that one girl ; and Enoch spoke his love,  
But Philip loved in silence ; and the girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him ;  
But she loved Enoch ; tho' she knew it not,  
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,



To purchase his own boat, and make a home

For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast

Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year

On board a merchantman, and made himself

Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life

From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas:

And all men look'd upon him favorably:  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May

He purchased his own boat, and made a home

For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up  
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,  
The younger people making holiday,  
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,

Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd  
(His father lying sick and needing him)  
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,

Just where the prone edge of the wood began

To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,  
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,  
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face

All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,  
And in their eyes and faces read his doom;  
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,  
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life  
Crept down into the hollows of the wood;  
There, while the rest were loud in merry-making,

Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past

Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,

And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,

Seven-happy years of health and competence,

And mutual love and honorable toil;

With children; first a daughter. In him woke,

With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish

To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
And give his child a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or hers; a wish renewed,

When two years after came a boy to be  
The rosy idol of her solitudes,  
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,  
Or often journeying landward; for in truth

Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil

In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,

Not only to the market-cross were known,  
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,  
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,  
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port  
Open'd a larger haven: thither used  
Enoch at times to go by land or sea;  
And once when there, and clambering on a mast

In harbor, by mischance he slipt and fell:  
A limb was broken when they lifted him;  
And while he lay recovering there, his wife  
Bore him another son, a sickly one:  
Another hand crept too across his trade  
Taking her bread and theirs: and on him fell,

Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,  
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.  
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
To see his children leading evermore  
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,  
And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd

"Save them from this, whatever comes to me."

And while he pray'd, the master of that ship

Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,

Came, for he knew the man and valued him,

Reporting of his vessel China bound,  
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?



There yet were many weeks before she  
sail'd,  
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch  
have the place?  
And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance ap-  
pear'd  
No graver than as when some little cloud  
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
And isles a light in the offing: yet the  
wife —  
When he was gone — the children —  
what to do?  
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his  
plans;  
To sell the boat — and yet he loved her  
well —  
How many a rough sea had he weather'd  
in her!  
He knew her, as a horseman knows his  
horse —  
And yet to sell her — then with what she  
brought  
Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth  
in trade  
With all that seamen needed or their  
wives —  
So might she keep the house while he  
was gone.  
Should he not trade himself out yonder?  
go  
This voyage more than once? yea twice  
or thrice —  
As oft as needed — last, returning rich,  
Become the master of a larger craft,  
With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:  
Then moving homeward came on Annie  
pale,  
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.  
Forward she started with a happy cry,  
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;  
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his  
limbs,  
Appraised his weight and fondled father-  
like,  
But had no heart to break his purposes  
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring  
had girt  
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:

Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd  
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)  
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
For her or his dear children, not to go.  
He not for his own self caring but her,  
Her and her children, let her plead in  
vain;  
So grieving held his will, and bore it  
thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-  
friend,  
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set  
his hand  
To fit their little streetward sitting-room  
With shelf and corner for the goods and  
stores.  
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,  
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and  
axe,  
Anger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear  
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd  
and rang,  
Till this was ended, and his careful  
hand, —  
The space was narrow, — having order'd  
all  
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs  
Her blossom or her seedling, paused;  
and he,  
Who needs would work for Annie to the  
last,  
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of fare-  
well  
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,  
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to  
him.  
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man  
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery  
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-  
God,  
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes  
Whatever came to him: and then he said  
"Annie, this voyage by the grace of God  
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.  
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,  
For I'll be back, my girl, before you  
know it."  
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle "and  
he,  
This pretty, puny, weakly little one, —  
Nay — for I love him all the better for  
it —



"Forward she started with a happy cry,  
And laid the feeble infant in his arms."

God bless him, he shall sit upon my  
knees  
And I will tell him tales of foreign  
parts,  
And make him merry, when I come home  
again.  
Come Annie, come, cheer up before I go."

Him running on thus hopefully she  
heard,  
And almost hoped herself ; but when he  
turn'd  
The current of his talk to graver things  
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
On providence and trust in Heaven, she  
heard,

Heard and not heard him ; as the village  
girl,  
Who sets her pitcher underneath the  
spring,  
Musing on him that used to fill it for  
her,  
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke "O Enoch, you  
are wise ;  
And yet for all your wisdom well know I  
That I shall look upon your face no more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall  
look on yours.  
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here

(He named the day); get you a seaman's  
glass,  
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your  
fears."

But when the last of those last moments  
came,

"Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,  
Look to the babes, and till I come again,  
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.  
And fear no more for me; or if you fear  
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor  
holds.

Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these  
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His: He made it."

Enoch rose,  
Cast his strong arms about his drooping  
wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;  
But for the third, the sickly one, who  
slept

After a night of feverous wakefulness,  
When Annie would have raised him Enoch  
said

"Wake him not; let him sleep; how  
should the child

Remember this?" and kiss'd him in his  
cot.

But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt  
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept  
Thro' all his future; but now hastily  
caught

His bundle, waved his hand, and went  
his way.

She when the day, that Enoch men-  
tion'd, came,

Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps  
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;  
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremu-  
lous;

She saw him not: and while he stood on  
deck

Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail  
She watch'd it, and departed weeping  
for him;

Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as  
his grave,

Set her sad will no less to chime with his,  
But throve not in her trade, not being bred  
To barter, nor compensating the want

By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,  
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
And still foreboding "what would Enoch  
say?"

For more than once, in days of difficulty  
And pressure, had she sold her wares for  
less

Than what she gave in buying what she  
sold:

She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and  
thus,

Expectant of that news which never came,  
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,  
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born  
and grew

Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it  
With all a mother's care: nevertheless,  
Whether her business often call'd her  
from it,

Or thro' the want of what it needed most,  
Or means to pay the voice who best could  
tell

What most it needed — howsoe'er it was,  
After a lingering, — ere she was aware, —  
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie bur-  
ied it,

Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for  
her peace

(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon  
her),

Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.  
"Surely" said Philip "I may see her  
now,

May be some little comfort"; therefore  
went,

Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
Paused for a moment at an inner door,

Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,  
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,

Fresh from the burial of her little one,  
Cared not to look on any human face,

But turn'd her own toward the wall and  
wept.

Then Philip standing up said falteringly  
"Annie, I came to ask a favor of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd  
reply

"Favor from one so sad and so forlorn  
As I am!" half abash'd him; yet unask'd,

His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
He set himself beside her, saying to her:



"I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,  
 Enoch, your husband : I have ever said  
 You chose the best among us — a strong  
 man :

For where he fixt his heart he set his hand  
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.  
 And wherefore did he go this weary way,  
 And leave you lonely ? not to see the  
 world —

For pleasure ? — nay, but for the where-  
 withal

To give his babes a better bringing-up  
 Than his had been or yours : that was  
 his wish.

And if he come again, vext will he be  
 To find the precious morning hours were  
 lost.

And it would vex him even in his grave,  
 If he could know his babes were running  
 wild

Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,  
 now —

Have we not known each other all our  
 lives ?

I do beseech you by the love you bear  
 Him and his children not to say me nay —  
 For, if you will, when Enoch comes again  
 Why then he shall repay me — if you will,  
 Annie — for I am rich and well-to-do.  
 Now let me put the boy and girl to school :  
 This is the favor that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against the  
 wall

Answer'd "I cannot look you in the face ;  
 I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
 When you came in my sorrow broke me  
 down ;

And now I think your kindness breaks  
 me down ;

But Enoch lives ; that is borne in on me :  
 He will repay you : money can be repaid ;  
 Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd

"Then you will let me, Annie ?"

There she turn'd,

She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes  
 upon him,

And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,  
 Then calling down a blessing on his head  
 Caught at his hand, and wrung it pas-  
 sionately,

And past into the little garth beyond.  
 So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to  
 school,  
 And bought them needful books, and  
 every way,

Like one who does his duty by his own,  
 Made himself theirs ; and tho' for Annie's  
 sake,

Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
 He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,  
 And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent  
 Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and  
 fruit,

The late and early roses from his wall,  
 Or conies from the down, and now and  
 then,

With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
 To save the offence of charitable, flour  
 From his tall mill that whistled on the  
 waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's  
 mind :

Scarce could the woman when he came  
 upon her,

Out of full heart and boundless gratitude  
 Light on a broken word to thank him  
 with.

But Philip was her children's all-in-all ;  
 From distant corners of the street they ran  
 To greet his hearty welcome heartily ;  
 Lords of his house and of his mill were they ;  
 Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs  
 Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd  
 with him

And call'd him Father Philip. Philip  
 gain'd

As Enoch lost ; for Enoch seem'd to them  
 Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
 Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
 Down at the far end of an avenue,  
 Going we know not where : and so ten  
 years,

Since Enoch left his hearth and native  
 land,

Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's chil-  
 dren long'd

To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
 And Annie would go with them ; then  
 they begg'd

For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too :  
 Him, like the working bee in blossom-  
 dust,

Blanch'd with his mill, they found ; and  
 saying to him

"Come with us Father Philip" he denied ;





Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,  
And bought them needful books."

But when the children pluck'd at him  
to go,  
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their  
wish,  
For was not Annie with them ? and they  
went.

But after scaling half the weary down,  
Just where the prone edge of the wood  
began

To feather toward the hollow, all her force  
Fail'd her ; and sighing "let me rest"  
she said :  
So Philip rested with her well-content ;  
While all the younger ones with jubilant  
cries

Broke from their elders, and tumultuously  
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a  
plunge  
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent  
or broke  
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away  
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other  
And calling, here and there, about the  
wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
Her presence, and remember'd one dark  
hour  
Here in this wood, when like a wounded  
life  
He crept into the shadow : at last he said

Lifting his honest forehead "Listen,  
Annie,  
How merry they are down yonder in the  
wood.  
Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak  
a word.  
"Tired?" but her face had fall'n upon her  
hands;  
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,  
"The ship was lost" he said "the ship  
was lost!  
No more of that! why should you kill  
yourself  
And make them orphans quite?" And  
Annie said  
"I thought not of it: but — I know not  
why —  
Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer  
spoke.  
"Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
And it has been upon my mind so long,  
That tho' I know not when it first came  
there,  
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,  
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,  
That he who left you ten long years ago  
Should still be living; well then — let  
me speak:  
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:  
I cannot help you as I wish to do  
Unless — they say that women are so  
quick —  
Perhaps you know what I would have  
you know —  
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove  
A father to your children: I do think  
They love me as a father: I am sure  
That I love them as if they were mine own;  
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,  
That after all these sad uncertain years,  
We might be still as happy as God grants  
To any of His creatures. Think upon it:  
For I am well-to-do — no kin, no care,  
No burden, save my care for you and  
yours:  
And we have known each other all our  
lives,  
And I have loved you longer than you  
know."

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she  
spoke:  
"You have been as God's good angel in  
our house.  
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,

Philip, with something happier than my-  
self.  
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved  
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?"  
"I am content" he answer'd "to be  
loved  
A little after Enoch." "O" she cried  
Scared as it were "dear Philip, wait a  
while:  
If Enoch comes — but Enoch will not  
come —  
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:  
Surely I shall be wiser in a year:  
O wait a little!" Philip sadly said  
"Annie, as I have waited all my life  
I well may wait a little." "Nay" she cried  
"I am bound: you have my promise —  
in a year:  
Will you not bide your year as I bide  
mine?"  
And Philip answer'd "I will bide my  
year."  
  
Here both were mute, till Philip glanc-  
ing up  
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day  
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;  
Then fearing night and chill for Annie  
rose,  
And sent his voice beneath him thro'  
the wood.  
Up came the children laden with their  
spoil;  
Then all descended to the port, and there  
At Annie's door he paused and gave his  
hand,  
Saying gently "Annie, when I spoke to  
you,  
That was your hour of weakness. I was  
wrong.  
I am always bound to you, but you are  
free."  
Then Annie weeping answer'd "I am  
bound."  
  
She spoke; and in one moment as it  
were,  
While yet she went about her household  
ways,  
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,  
That he had loved her longer than she  
knew,  
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,  
And there he stood once more before her  
face,  
Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?"  
she ask'd.

"Yes, if the nuts" he said "be ripe again :  
Come out and see." But she — she put  
him off —

So much to look to — such a change — a  
month —

Give her a month — she knew that she  
was bound —

A month — no more. Then Philip with  
his eyes

Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice  
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,  
"Take your own time, Annie, take your  
own time."

And Annie could have wept for pity of  
him ;

And yet she held him on delayingly  
With many a scarce-believable excuse,  
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,  
Till half-another year had slipped away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,  
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.  
Some thought that Philip did but trifle  
with her ;

Some that she but held off to draw him on ;  
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,  
As simple folk that knew not their own  
minds ;

And one, in whom all evil fancies clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly  
Would hint at worse in either. Her own  
son

Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish ;  
But evermore the daughter prest upon  
her

To wed the man so dear to all of them  
And lift the household out of poverty ;  
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew  
Careworn and wan ; and all these things  
fell on her  
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced  
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly  
Pray'd for a sign "my Enoch is he gone?"  
Then compass'd round by the blind wall  
of night

Brook'd not the expectant terror of her  
heart,

Started from bed, and struck herself a  
light,

Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
"Under the palm-tree." That was noth-  
ing to her :

No meaning there : she closed the Book  
and slept :

When lo ! her Enoch sitting on a height,  
Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun :  
"He is gone" she thought "he is happy,  
he is singing

Hosanna in the highest : yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be  
palms

Whereof the happy people strewing cried  
'Hosanna in the highest !'" Here she  
woke,

Resolved, sent for him and said wildly  
to him

"There is no reason why we should not  
wed."

"Then for God's sake," he answer'd,  
"both our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang  
the bells,

Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.  
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.

A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,  
She knew not whence ; a whisper on her  
ear,

She knew not what ; nor loved she to be  
left

Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.  
What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd,  
often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,  
Fearing to enter : Philip thought he  
knew :

Such doubts and fears were common to  
her state,

Being with child : but when her child  
was born,

Then her new child was as herself renew'd,  
Then the new mother came about her  
heart,

Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,  
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch ? prosperously  
sail'd

The ship "Good Fortune," tho' at set-  
ting forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,  
shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unwept  
She slept across the summer of the world,  
Then after a long tumble about the Cape  
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,  
She passing thro' the summer world again,  
The breath of heaven came continually





"By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,  
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong."

And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,  
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and  
bought  
Quaint monsters for the market of those  
times,  
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage : at first  
indeed  
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,  
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-  
head

Stared o'er the ripple feathering from  
her bows :

Then follow'd calms, and then winds  
variable,

Then baffling, a long course of them ;  
and last

Storm, such as drove her under moon-  
less heavens

Till hard upon the cry of "breakers" came  
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
But Enoch and two others. Half the  
night,

Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken  
spars,



These drifted, stranding on an isle at  
morn  
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourish-  
ing roots ;

Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.  
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-  
gorge

They built, and thatch'd with leaves of  
palm, a hut,

Half hut, half native cavern. So the  
three,

Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more  
than boy,

Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and  
wreck,

Lay lingering out a five-years' death-  
in-life.

They could not leave him. After he  
was gone,

The two remaining found a fallen stem ;  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,  
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.  
In those two deaths he read God's warn-  
ing " wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak,  
the lawns

And winding glades high up like ways  
to Heaven,

The slender coco's drooping crown of  
plumes,

The lightning flash of insect and of bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses

That coil'd around the stately stems,  
and ran

Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the world,

All these he saw ; but what he fain had  
seen

He could not see, the kindly human face,  
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard

The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-  
fowl,

The league-long roller thundering on the  
reef,

The moving whisper of huge trees that  
branch'd

And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep  
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,

As down the shore he ranged, or all day  
long

Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail :

No sail from day to day, but every day  
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts

Among the palms and ferns and preci-  
pices ;

The blaze upon the waters to the east ;  
The blaze upon his island overhead ;

The blaze upon the waters to the west ;  
Then the great stars that globed them-  
selves in Heaven,

The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again  
The scarlet shafts of sunrise — but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd  
to watch,

So still, the golden lizard on him paused,  
A phantom made of many phantoms

moved  
Before him haunting him, or he himself  
Moved haunting people, things and

places, known  
Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;

The babes, their babble, Annie, the  
small house,

The climbing street, the mill, the leafy  
lanes,

The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,  
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the  
chill

November dawns and dewy-glooming  
downs,

The gentle shower, the smell of dying  
leaves,

And the low moan of leaden-color'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,  
Tho' faintly, merrily — far and faraway —

He heard the pealing of his parish bells ;  
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, start-  
ed up

Shuddering, and when the beauteous  
hateful isle

Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart  
Spoken with That, which being every-  
where

Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem  
all alone,

Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head  
The sunny and rainy seasons came and  
went

Year after year. His hopes to see his  
own,

And pace the sacred old familiar fields,  
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely  
doom

Came suddenly to an end. Another ship  
(She wanted water) blown by baffling  
winds,

Like the Good Fortune, from her destined  
course,

Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where  
she lay :

For since the mate had seen at early dawn  
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle  
The silent water slipping from the hills,  
They sent a crew that landing burst away  
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd  
the shores

With clamor. Downward from his  
mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded soli-  
tary,

Brown, looking hardly human, strangely  
clad,

Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it  
seem'd,

With inarticulate rage, and making signs  
They knew not what : and yet he led  
the way

To where the rivulets of sweet water ran ;  
And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
And heard them talking, his long-bounden  
tongue

Was loosen'd, till he made them under-  
stand ;

Whom, when their casks were fill'd they  
took aboard :

And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,  
Scarce-credited at first but more and more,  
Amazed and melted all wholisten'd to it :  
And clothes they gave him and free pas-  
sage home ;

But oft he work'd among the rest and shook  
His isolation from him. None of these  
Came from his county, or could answer  
him,

If question'd, aught of what he cared to  
know.

And dull the voyage was with long delays,  
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but ever-  
more

His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon  
He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-  
breath

Of England, blown across her ghostly wall :  
And that same morning officers and men  
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,

Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it :  
Then moving up the coast they landed  
him,

Ev'n in that harbor whence he sail'd be-  
fore.

There Enoch spoke no word to anyone,  
But homeward — home — what home ?  
had he a home ?

His home, he walk'd. Bright was that  
afternoon,

Sunny but chill ; till drawn thro' either  
chasm,

Where either haven open'd on the deeps,  
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world  
in gray ;

Cut off the length of highway on before,  
And left but narrow breadth to left and  
right

Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.  
On the nigh-naked tree the Robin piped  
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze  
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it  
down :

Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom ;  
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted  
light

Flared on him, and he came upon the  
place.

Then down the long street having  
slowly stolen,

His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the  
home

Where Annie lived and loved him, and  
his babes

In those far-off seven happy years were  
born ;

But finding neither light nor murmur  
there

(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle)  
crept

Still downward thinking " dead or dead  
to me ! "

Down to the pool and narrow wharf  
he went,

Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
A front of timber-crost antiquity,  
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
He thought it must have gone ; but he  
was gone

Who kept it ; and his widow, Miriam  
Lane,

With daily-dwindling profits held the  
house ;

A haunt of brawlingseamen once, but now  
Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.  
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and gar-  
rulous,  
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
Told him, with other annals of the port,  
Not knowing — Enoch was so brown, so  
bow'd,

So broken — all the story of his house.  
His baby's death, her growing poverty,  
How Philip put her little ones to school,  
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,  
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the  
birth

Of Philip's child : and o'er his counte-  
nance

No shadow past, nor motion : anyone,  
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale  
Less than the teller : only when she closed  
“Enoch, poor man, was cast away and  
lost”

He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
Repeated muttering “cast away and  
lost” ;

Again in deeper inward whispers “lost !”

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again ;  
“If I might look on her sweet face again  
And know that she is happy.” So the  
thought

Haunted and harass'd him, and drove  
him forth,

At evening when the dull November day  
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.  
There he sat down gazing on all below ;  
There did a thousand memories roll upon  
him,

Unspeaking for sadness. By and by  
The ruddy square of comfortable light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's  
house,

Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures  
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes  
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
street,

The latest house to landward ; but behind,  
With one small gate that open'd on the  
waste,

Flourish'd a little garden square and  
wall'd :

And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk  
Of shingle, and a walk divided it :

But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and  
stole

Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and  
thence

That which he better might have shunn'd,  
if griefs

Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd  
board

Sparkled and shone ; so genial was the  
hearth :

And on the right hand of the hearth he saw  
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,  
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees ;  
And o'er her second father stooped a girl,  
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted  
hand

Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring  
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy  
arms,

Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they  
laugh'd :

And on the left hand of the hearth he  
saw

The mother glancing often toward her  
babe,

But turning now and then to speak with  
him,

Her son, who stood beside her tall and  
strong,

And saying that which pleased him, for  
he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life  
beheld

His wife his wife no more, and saw the  
babe

Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,  
And all the warmth, the peace, the hap-  
piness,

And his own children tall and beautiful,  
And him, that other, reigning in his place,  
Lord of his rights and of his children's  
love, —

Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him  
all,

Because things seen are mightier than  
things heard,

Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch,  
and fear'd

To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,  
Which in one moment, like the blast of  
doom,

Would shatter all the happiness of the  
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,  
And feeling all along the garden-wall,  
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,  
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but  
that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

"Too hard to bear ! why did they take  
me thence ?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer ! aid me, give me strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her peace.  
My children too ! must I not speak to  
these ?

They know me not. I should betray  
myself.

Never : no father's kiss for me — the girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

There speech and thought and nature  
fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced ; but when he rose  
and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street he  
went  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burden of a song,  
"Not to tell her, never to let her know."

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore  
Prayer from a living source within the will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,  
Kept him a living soul. "This miller's  
wife"

He said to Miriam "that you told me of,  
Has she no fear that her first husband  
lives ?"

"Ay, ay, poor soul" said Miriam, "fear  
enow !

If you could tell her you had seen him  
dead,

Why, that would be her comfort" ; and  
he thought

"After the Lord has call'd me she shall  
know,

I wait His time" and Enoch set himself,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.  
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.  
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or  
help'd

At lading and unlading the tall barks,  
That brought the stunted commerce of  
those days ;

Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself :  
Yet since he did but labor for himself,  
Work without hope, there was not life  
in it

Whereby the man could live ; and as the  
year

Roll'd itself round again to meet the day  
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came  
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
Weakening the man, till he could do no  
more,

But kept the house, his chair, and last  
his bed.

And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.  
For sure no gladlier does the stranded  
wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall  
The boat that bears the hope of life ap-  
proach

To save the life despair'd of, than he saw  
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kind-  
lier hope

On Enoch thinking "after I am gone,  
Then may she learn I loved her to the  
last."

He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said  
"Woman, I have a secret — only swear,  
Before I tell you — swear upon the book  
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."

"Dead" clamor'd the good woman "hear  
him talk !

I warrant, man, that we shall bring you  
round."

"Swear" added Enoch sternly "on the  
book."

And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam  
swore.

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,  
"Did you know Enoch Arden of this  
town ?"

"Know him ?" she said "I knew him  
far away.

Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the  
street ;



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"Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burden of a song,  
'Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

Held his head high, and cared for no  
man, he."

Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her ;  
"His head is low, and no man cares for  
him.

I think I have not three days more to live ;  
I am the man." At which the woman gave  
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.

"You Arden, you ! nay, — sure he was  
a foot

Higher than you be." Enoch said again  
"My God has bow'd me down to what  
I am ;

My grief and solitude have broken me ;  
Nevertheless, know you that I am he

Who married — but that name has twice  
been changed —

I married her who married Philip Ray.  
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his  
voyage,

His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,  
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,  
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,  
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,  
While in her heart she yearn'd inces-  
santly

To rush abroad all round the little haven,  
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes ;  
But awed and promise-bounden she for-  
bore,

Saying only "See your bairns before you go !

Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose  
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung  
A moment on her words, but then replied.

"Woman, disturb me not now at the last,

But let me hold my purpose till I die.  
Sit down again ; mark me and understand,  
While I have power to speak. I charge  
you now,  
When you shall see her, tell her that I  
died

Blessing her, praying for her, loving her ;  
Save for the bar between us, loving her  
As when she laid her head beside my own.  
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw  
So like her mother, that my latest breath  
Was spent in blessing her and praying  
for her.

And tell my son that I died blessing him.  
And say to Philip that I blest him too ;  
He never meant us anything but good.  
But if my children care to see me dead,  
Who hardly knew me living, let them  
come,

I am their father ; but she must not come,  
For my dead face would vex her after-  
life.

And now there is but one of all my blood,  
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be :  
This hair is his : she cut it off and gave it,  
And I have borne it with me all these  
years,

And thought to bear it with me to my  
grave ;

But now my mind is changed, for I shall  
see him,

My babe in bliss : wherefore when I am  
gone,

Take, give her this, for it may comfort  
her :

It will moreover be a token to her,  
That I am he."

He ceased ; and Miriam Lane  
Made such a voluble answer promising  
all,

That once again he roll'd his eyes upon  
her

Repeating all he wish'd, and once again  
She promised.

Then the third night after this,  
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and  
pale,

And Miriam watch'd and dozed at inter-  
vals,

There came so loud a calling of the sea,  
That all the houses in the haven rang.

He woke, he rose, he spread his arms  
abroad

Crying with a loud voice "a sail ! a sail !  
I am saved" ; and so fell back and spoke  
no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.  
And when they buried him the little port  
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

## AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

DUST are our frames ; and, gilded dust,  
our pride

Look only for a moment whole and sound ;  
Like that long-buried body of the king,  
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,  
Which at a touch of light, an air of  
heaven,

Slipt into ashes and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape  
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I saw  
Sunning himself in a waste field alone —  
Old, and a mine of memories — who had  
served,

Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,  
And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLME that almighty  
man,

The county God — in whose capacious  
hall,

Hung with a hundred shields, the family  
tree

Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
king —

Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the  
spire,

Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-  
gates

And swang besides on many a windy  
sign —

Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head  
Saw from his windows nothing save his  
own —

What lovelier of his own had he than her,  
His only child, his Edith, whom he loved  
As heiress and not heir regretfully ?

But "he that marries her marries her  
name"



Aylmer Hall.

This fiat somewhat soothed himself and wife,  
 His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,  
 Insipid as the Queen upon a card ;  
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly more  
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,  
 Little about it stirring save a brook !  
 A sleepy land where under the same wheel  
 The same old rut would deepen year by year ;  
 Where almost all the village had one name ;  
 Where Aylmer follow'd Aylmer at the Hall  
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
 Thrice over ; so that Rectory and Hall,  
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,

Were open to each other ; tho' to dream  
 That Love could bind them closer well  
 had made  
 The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up  
 With horror, worse than had he heard  
 his priest  
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men  
 Daughters of God ; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
 it so,  
 Somewhere beneath his own low range  
 of roofs,  
 Have also set his many-shielded tree ?  
 There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage  
 once,  
 When the red rose was redder than itself,  
 And York's white rose as red as Lancas-  
 ter's,



With wounded peace which each had  
prick'd to death.

"Not proven" Averill said, or laughingly  
"Some other race of Averills" — prov'n  
or no,

What cared he? what, if other or the  
same?

He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.  
But Leolin, his brother, living oft  
With Averill, and a year or two before  
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away  
By one low voice to one dear neighbor-  
hood,

Would often, in his walks with Edith,  
claim

A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was : a but less vivid hue  
Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom  
Flamed in his cheek ; and eager eyes, that  
still

Took joyful note of all things joyful,  
beam'd,

Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,  
Their best and brightest, when they dwelt  
on hers,

Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,  
But subject to the season or the mood,  
Shone like a mystic star between the less  
And greater glory varying to and fro,  
We know not wherefore ; bounteously  
made,

And yet so finely, that a troublous touch  
Thin'd, or would seem to thin her in a  
day,

A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.  
And these had been together from the  
first.

Leolin's first nurse was, five years after,  
hers :

So much the boy foreran ; but when his  
date

Doubled her own, for want of playmates,  
he

(Since Averill was a decade and a half  
His elder, and their parents underground)  
Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and  
roll'd

His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt  
Against the rush of the air in the prone  
swing,

Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, ar-  
ranged

Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it  
green

In living letters, told her fairy-tales,

Show'd her the fairy footings on the  
grass,

The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
The petty marestail forest, fairy pines,  
Or from the tiny pitted target blew

What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd  
All at one mark, all hitting : make-  
believes

For Edith and himself : or else he forged,  
But that was later, boyish histories  
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,  
Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true  
love

Crown'd after trial ; sketches rude and  
faint,

But where a passion yet unborn perhaps  
Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightin-  
gale.

And thus together, save for college-times  
Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
Or Heav'n in lavish bounty moulded,  
grew.

And more and more, the maiden woman-  
grown,

He wasted hours with Averill ; there,  
when first

The tented winter-field was broken up  
Into that phalanx of the summer spears  
That soon should wear the garland ;  
there again

When burr and bine were gather'd ;  
lastly there

At Christmas ; ever welcome at the Hall,  
On whose dull sameness his full tide of  
youth

Broke with a phosphorescence cheering  
even

My lady ; and the Baronet yet had laid  
No bar between them : dull and self-  
involved,

Tall and erect, but bending from his height  
With half-allowing smiles for all the  
world,

And mighty courteous in the main — his  
pride

Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring —  
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
Would care no more for Leolin's walking  
with her

Than for his old Newfoundland's, when  
they ran

To loose him at the stables, for he rose  
Twofooted at the limit of his chain,  
Roaring to make a third : and how should  
Love,



Whom the cross-lightnings of four chance-  
met eyes  
Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow  
Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
Seldom, but when he does, Master of all.

So these young hearts not knowing  
that they loved,  
Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar  
Between them, nor by plight or broken  
ring  
Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
Wander'd at will, but oft accompanied  
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that  
hung  
With wings of brooding shelter o'er her  
peace,  
Might have been other, save for Leolin's—  
Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour  
by hour  
Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and  
drank  
The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.  
For out beyond her lodges, where the  
brook  
Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran  
By sallowy rims, arose the laborers' homes,  
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls  
That dimpling died into each other, huts  
At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.  
Her art, her hand, her counsel all had  
wrought  
About them: here was one that, sum-  
mer-blanch'd,  
Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-  
joy  
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here  
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden  
hearth  
Broke from a bower of vine and honey-  
suckle:  
One look'd all rosetree, and another wore  
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars:  
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
About it; this, a milky-way on earth,  
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's  
heavens,  
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;  
One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves  
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;  
Each, its own charm; and Edith's  
everywhere;  
And Edith ever visitant with him,  
He but less loved than Edith, of her poor:  
For she — so lowly-lovely and so loving,

Queenly responsive when the loyal hand  
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,  
Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing  
by,  
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height  
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice  
Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
A splendid presence flattering the poor  
roofs  
Revered as theirs, but kindlier than  
themselves  
To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
Or old bedridden palsy, — was adored;  
He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp  
Having the warmth and muscle of the  
heart,  
A childly way with children, and a laugh  
Ringing like proven golden coinage true,  
Were no false passport to that easy realm,  
Where once with Leolin at her side, the  
girl,  
Nursing a child, and turning to the  
warmth  
The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,  
Heard the good mother softly whisper  
“Bless,  
God bless 'em: marriages are made in  
Heaven.”

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to  
her.  
My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced  
With half a score of swarthy faces came.  
His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,  
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;  
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the  
hour,  
Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he  
dash'd  
Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
Of patron “Good! my lady's kinsman!  
good!”  
My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
To listen: unawares they flitted off,  
Busying themselves about the flowerage  
That stood from out a stiff brocade in  
which,  
The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,  
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those  
days:  
But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him  
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his  
life:

Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye  
 Hated him with a momentary hate.  
 Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he :  
 I know not, for he spoken not, only shower'd  
 His oriental gifts on every one  
 And most on Edith : like a storm he came,  
 And shook the house, and like a storm  
 he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly  
 He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return  
 When others had been tested) there was  
 one,  
 A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it  
 Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd  
 itself  
 Fine as ice-ferns on January panes  
 Made by a breath. I know not whence  
 at first,  
 Nor of what race, the work ; but as he told  
 The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves  
 He got it ; for their captain after fight,  
 His comrades having fought their last  
 below,  
 Was climbing up the valley ; at whom  
 he shot :  
 Down from the beetling crag to which  
 he clung  
 Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
 This dagger with him, which when now  
 admired  
 By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,  
 At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,  
 Tost over all her presents petulantly :  
 And when she show'd the wealthy scab-  
 bard, saying  
 "Look what a lovely piece of workman-  
 ship !"   
 Slight was his answer "Well — I care  
 not for it" ;  
 Then playing with the blade he prick'd  
 his hand,  
 "A gracious gift to give a lady, this !"   
 "But would it be more gracious" ask'd  
 the girl  
 "Were I to give this gift of his to one  
 That is no lady?" "Gracious? No"  
 said he.  
 "Me? — but I cared not for it. O par-  
 don me,  
 I seem to be ungraciousness itself."  
 "Take it" she added sweetly "tho' his  
 gift ;  
 For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,  
 I care not for it either" ; and he said

"Why then I love it" : but Sir Aylmer  
 past,  
 And neither loved nor liked the thing he  
 heard.

The next day came a neighbor. Blues  
 and reds  
 They talk'd of : blues were sure of it, he  
 thought :  
 Then of the latest fox — where started —  
 kill'd  
 In such a bottom : "Peter had the brush,  
 My Peter, first" : and did Sir Aylmer know  
 That great pock-pitten fellow had been  
 caught ?  
 Then made his pleasure echo, hand to  
 hand,  
 And rolling as it were the substance of it  
 Between his palms a moment up and  
 down —  
 "The birds were warm, the birds were  
 warm upon him ;  
 We have him now" : and had Sir Ayl-  
 mer heard —  
 Nay, but he must — the land was ring-  
 ing of it —  
 This blacksmith-border marriage — one  
 they knew —  
 Raw from the nursery — who could trust  
 a child ?  
 That cursed France with her egalities !  
 And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially  
 With nearing chair and lower'd accent)  
 think —  
 For people talk'd — that it was wholly  
 wise  
 To let that handsome fellow Averill walk  
 So freely with his daughter? people  
 talk'd —  
 The boy might get a notion into him ;  
 The girl might be entangled ere she knew.  
 Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening  
 spoke :  
 "The girl and boy, Sir, know their dif-  
 ferences !"   
 "Good" said his friend "but watch !"   
 and he "enough,  
 More than enough, Sir ! I can guard  
 my own."  
 They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer  
 watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the house  
 Had fallen first, was Edith that same  
 night ;  
 Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough  
 piece

Of early rigid color, under which  
Withdrawing by the counter door to that  
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon  
him

A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as one  
Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,  
And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
Turning beheld the Powers of the House  
On either side the hearth, indignant; her,  
Cooling her false cheek with a featherfan,  
Him glaring, by his own stale devil  
spurr'd,

And, like a beast hard-ridden, breathing  
hard.

"Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,  
Presumptuous! trusted as he was with  
her,

The sole succeder to their wealth, their  
lands,

The last remaining pillar of their house,  
The one transmitter of their ancient name,  
Their child." "Our child!" "Our  
heirress!" "Ours!" for still,

Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came  
Her sicklier iteration. Last he said

"Boy, mark me! for your fortunes are  
to make.

I swear you shall not make them out of  
mine.

Now inasmuch as you have practised on  
her,

Perplext her, made her half forget herself,  
Swerve from her duty to herself and us —  
Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,  
Far as we track ourselves — I say that  
this —

Else I withdraw favor and countenance  
From you and yours for ever — shall you  
do.

Sir, when you see her — but you shall  
not see her —

No, you shall write, and not to her, but  
me:

And you shall say that having spoken  
with me,

And after look'd into yourself, you find  
That you meant nothing — as indeed  
you know

That you meant nothing. Such a match  
as this!

Impossible, prodigious!" These were  
words,

As meted by his measure of himself,  
Arguing boundless forbearance: after  
which,

And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, "I  
So foul a traitor to myself and her,

Never O never," for about as long  
As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
paused

Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
within,

Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and  
crying

"Boy, should I find you by my doors  
again,

My men shall lash you from them like a  
dog;

Hence!" with a sudden execration drove  
The footstool from before him, and arose;  
So, stammering "scoundrel" out of  
teeth that ground

As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still  
Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man  
Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood  
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face  
Meet for the reverence of the hearth,

but now,  
Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,  
Vext with unworthy madness, and de-  
form'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye  
That watch'd him, till he heard the pon-  
derous door

Close, crashing with long echoes thro'  
the land,

Went Leolin; then, his passions all in flood  
And masters of his motion, furiously  
Down thro' the bright lawns to his  
brother's ran,  
And foam'd away his heart at Averill's  
ear:

Whom Averill solaced as he might,  
amazed:

The man was his, had been his father's,  
friend:

He must have seen, himself had seen it  
long;

He must have known, himself had  
known: besides,

He never yet had set his daughter forth  
Here in the woman-markets of the west,  
Where our Caucasians let themselves be  
sold.

Some one, he thought, had slander'd  
Leolin to him.

"Brother, for I have loved you more as son  
Than brother, let me tell you: I myself —  
What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it?  
Jilted I was: I say it for your peace.  
Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the shame  
The woman should have borne, humili-  
ated,

I lived for years a stunted sunless life ;  
Till after our good parents past away  
Watching your growth, I seem'd again  
to grow.

Leolin, I almost sin in envying you :  
The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
Loves you : I know her : the worst  
thought she has

Is whiter even than her pretty hand :  
She must prove true : for, brother, where  
two fight

The strongest wins, and truth and love  
are strength,  
And you are happy : let her parents be."

But Leolin cried out the more upon  
them —

Insolent, brainless, heartless ! heiress,  
wealth,

Their wealth, their heiress ! wealth  
enough was theirs

Fortwenty matches. Were he lord of this,  
Why twenty boys and girls should marry  
on it,

And forty blest ones bless him, and him-  
self

Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He be-  
lieved

This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon  
made

The harlot of the cities : nature crost  
Was mother of the foul adulteries

That saturate soul with body. Name,  
too ! name,

Their ancient name ! they *might* be  
proud ; its worth

Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she  
had look'd

Darling, to-night ! they must have rated  
her

Beyond all tolerance. These old pheas-  
ant-lords,

These partridge-breeders of a thousand  
years,

Who had mildew'd in their thousands,  
doing nothing

Since Egbert — why, the greater their  
disgrace !

Fall back upon a name ! rest, rot in that !  
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler ? fools,

With such a vantage-ground for noble-  
ness !

He had known a man, a quintessence of  
man,

The life of all — who madly loved — and  
he,

Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,

Had rioted his life out, and made an end.  
He would not do it ! her sweet face and  
faith

Held him from that : but he had powers,  
he knew it :

Back would he to his studies, make a name,  
Name, fortune too : the world should ring  
of him

To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their  
graves :

Chancellor, or what is greatest would he  
be —

"O brother, I am grieved to learn your  
grief —

Give me my fling, and let me say my  
say."

At which, like one that sees his own  
excess,

And easily forgives it as his own,  
He laugh'd ; and then was mute ; but  
presently

Wept like a storm : and honest Averill  
seeing

How low his brother's mood had fallen,  
fetch'd

His richest beeswing from a binn reserved  
For banquets, praised the waning red,  
and told

The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came  
of age —

Then drank and past it ; till at length  
the two,

Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed  
That much allowance must be made for  
men.

After an angry dream this kindlier glow  
Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

Yet once by night again the lovers  
met,

A perilous meeting under the tall pines  
That darken'd all the northward of her  
Hall.

Him, to her meek and modest bosom  
prest

In agony, she promised that no force,  
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her :

He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
Labor for his own Edith, and return

In such a sunlight of prosperity  
He should not be rejected. "Write to  
me !

They loved me, and because I love their  
child

They hate me : there is war between us,  
dear,



Which breaks all bonds but ours ; we  
must remain  
Sacred to one another." So they talk'd,  
Poor children, for their comfort : the wind  
blew ;  
The rain of heaven, and their own bitter  
tears,  
Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,  
mixt  
Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other  
In darkness, and above them roar'd the  
pine.

So Leolin went ; and as we task our-  
selves  
To learn a language known but smatter-  
ingly  
In phrases here and there at random, toil'd  
Mastering the lawless science of our law,  
That codeless myriad of precedent,  
That wilderness of single instances,  
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,  
May beat a pathway out to wealth and  
fame.  
The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's  
room,  
Lightning of the hour, the pun, the  
scurrilous tale, —  
Old scandals buried now seven decades  
deep  
In other scandals that have lived and died,  
And left the living scandal that shall  
die —  
Were dead to him already ; bent as he was  
To make disproof of scorn, and strong in  
hopes,  
And prodigal of all brain-labor he,  
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exercise,  
Except when for a breathing-while at eve,  
Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran  
Beside the river-bank : and then indeed  
Harder the times were, and the hands  
of power  
Were bloodier, and the according hearts  
of men  
Seem'd harder too ; but the soft river-  
breeze,  
Which fann'd the gardens of that rival  
rose  
Yet fragrant in a heart remembering  
His former talks with Edith, on him  
breathed  
Far purer in his rushings to and fro,  
After his books, to flush his blood with air,  
Then to his books again. My lady's  
cousin,  
Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,

Drove in upon the student once or twice,  
Ran a Malayan muck against the times,  
Had golden hopes for France and all  
mankind,  
Answer'd all queries touching those at  
home  
With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,  
And fain had haled him out into the world,  
And air'd him there : his nearer friend  
would say  
"Screw not the chord too sharply lest it  
snap."  
Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger forth  
From where his worldless heart had kept  
it warm,  
Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of  
him  
Approvingly, and prophesied his rise :  
For heart, I think, help'd head : her let-  
ters too,  
Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
Like broken music, written as she found  
Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,  
Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till  
he saw  
An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,  
Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued them-  
selves  
To sell her, those good parents, for her  
good.  
Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth  
Might lie within their compass, him they  
lured  
Into their net made pleasant by the baits  
Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.  
So month by month the noise about their  
doors,  
And distant blaze of those dull banquets,  
made  
The nightly wirer of their innocent hare  
Falter before he took it. All in vain.  
Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd  
Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
So often, that the folly taking wings  
Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind  
With rumor, and became in other fields  
A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
And laughter to their lords : but those  
at home,  
As hunters round a hunted creature draw  
The cordon close and closer toward the  
death,  
Narrow'd her goings out and comings in ;  
Forbade her first the house of Averill,

Then closed her access to the wealthier farms,

Last from her own home-circle of the poor  
They barr'd her : yet she bore it : yet  
her cheek

Kept color : wondrous ! but, O mystery !  
What amulet drew her down to that old  
oak,

So old, that twenty years before, a part  
Falling had let appear the brand of  
John —

Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,  
but now

The broken base of a black tower, a cave  
Of touchwood, with a single flourishing  
spray.

There the manorial lord too curiously  
Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust  
Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove ;  
Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and  
read

Writhing a letter from his child, for which  
Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,  
A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,  
But scared with threats of jail and halter  
gave

To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits  
The letter which he brought, and swore  
besides

To play their go-between as heretofore  
Nor let them know themselves betray'd ;  
and then,

Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,  
went

Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot  
dream

The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn  
Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue  
brush'd

Thro' the dim meadow toward his treasure-trove,

Seized it, took home, and to my lady, —  
who made

A downward crescent of her minion mouth,  
Listless in all despondence, — read ; and  
tore,

As if the living passion symbol'd there  
Were living nerves to feel the rent ; and  
burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self defied,  
Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks  
of scorn

In babyisms, and dear diminutives  
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary

Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
After much wailing, hush'd itself at last  
Hopeless of answer : then tho' Averill  
wrote

And bade him with good heart sustain  
himself —

All would be well — the lover heeded not,  
But passionately restless came and went,  
And rustling once at night about the place,  
There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,  
Raging return'd : nor was it well for her  
Kept to the garden now, and grove of  
pines,

Watch'd even there ; and one was set to  
watch

The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
them all,

Yet bitterer from his readings : once  
indeed,

Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride  
in her,

She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly  
Not knowing what possess'd him : that  
one kiss

Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth ;  
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
Seem'd hope's returning rose : and then  
ensued

A Martin's summer of his faded love,  
Or ordeal by kindness ; after this  
He seldom crost his child without a sneer ;  
The mother flow'd in shallower acrimo-  
nies :

Never one kindly smile, one kindly word :  
So that the gentle creature shut from all  
Her charitable use, and face to face  
With twenty months of silence, slowly  
lost

Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.  
Last, some low fever ranging round to spy  
The weakness of a people or a house,  
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,  
or men,

Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt —  
Save Christ as we believe him — found  
the girl

And flung her down upon a couch of fire,  
Where careless of the household faces near,  
And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
She, and with her the race of Aylmer,  
past.

Star to star vibrates light : may soul  
to soul

Strike thro' a finer element of her own ?  
So, — from afar, — touch as at once ? or  
why

That night, that moment, when she  
 named his name,  
 Did the keen shriek "yes love, yes Edith,  
 yes,"  
 Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers  
 woke,  
 And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,  
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and  
 trembling,  
 His hair as it were crackling into flames,  
 His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp  
 a flyer :  
 Nor knew he wherefore he had made the  
 cry ;  
 And being much befool'd and idioted  
 By the rough amity of the other, sank  
 As into sleep again. The second day,  
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
 A breaker of the bitter news from home,  
 Found a dead man, a letter edged with  
 death  
 Beside him, and the dagger which himself  
 Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's  
 blood :  
 "From Edith" was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his  
 death.  
 And when he came again, his flock be-  
 lieved —  
 Beholding how the years which are not  
 Time's  
 Had blasted him — that many thousand  
 days  
 Were clipt by horror from his term of life.  
 Yet the sad mother, for the second death  
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness  
 of the first,  
 And being used to find her pastor texts,  
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him  
 To speak before the people of her child,  
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day  
 rose :  
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded  
 woods  
 Was all the life of it ; for hard on these,  
 A breathless burden of low-folded heavens  
 Stifled and chill'd at once : but every roof  
 Sent out a listener : many too had known  
 Edith among the hamlets round, and since  
 The parents' harshness and the hapless  
 loves  
 And double death were widely murmur'd,  
 left  
 Their own gray tower, or plain-faced  
 tabernacle,

To hear him ; all in mourning these,  
 and those  
 With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove  
 Or kerchief ; while the church, — one  
 night, except  
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the lan-  
 cets, — made  
 Still paler the pale head of him, who  
 tower'd  
 Above them, with his hopes in either  
 grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd  
 Averill,  
 His face magnetic to the hand from which  
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd thro'  
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse  
 "Behold,  
 Your house is left unto you desolate !"  
 But lapsed into so long a pause again  
 As half amazed half frighted all his flock :  
 Then from his height and loneliness of  
 grief  
 Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry  
 heart  
 Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one  
 sea,  
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,  
 And all but those who knew the living  
 God —  
 Eight that were left to make a purer  
 world —  
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake,  
 thunder, wrought  
 Such waste and havoc as the idolatries,  
 Which from the low light of mortality  
 Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of  
 Heavens,  
 And worshipt their own darkness as the  
 Highest ?  
 "Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy  
 brute Baäl,  
 And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,  
 For with thy worst self hast thou clothed  
 thy God.  
 Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baäl.  
 The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now  
 The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.  
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine  
 own lusts ! —  
 No coarse and blockish God of acreage  
 Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to —  
 Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
 And princely halls, and farms, and flow-  
 ing lawns,

And heaps of living gold that daily grow,  
And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.  
In such a shape dost thou behold thy God.  
Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*; for  
thine

Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
Is wounded to the death that cannot die;  
And tho' thou numberest with the fol-  
lowers

Of One who cried 'leave all and follow  
me.'

Thee therefore with His light about thy  
feet,

Thee with His message ringing in thine  
ears,

Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord  
from Heaven,

Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty  
God,

Count the more base idolater of the two;  
Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire  
Bodies, but souls—thy children's—  
thro' the smoke,

The blight of low desires—darkening  
thine own

To thine own likeness; or if one of these,  
Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and  
fair—

Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one  
By those who most have cause to sorrow  
for her—

Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,  
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,  
Fair as the Angel that said 'hail' she  
seem'd,

Who entering fill'd the house with sud-  
den light.

For so mine own was brighten'd: where  
indeed

The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven  
Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?  
whose the babe

Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child  
of shame,

The common care whom no one cared for,  
leapt

To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,  
As with the mother he had never known,  
In gambols; for her fresh and innocent  
eyes

Had such a star of morning in their blue,  
That all neglected places of the field

Broke into nature's music when they saw  
her.

Low was her voice, but won mysterious  
way

Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one  
Was all but silence—free of alms her  
hand—

The hand that robbed your cottage-walls  
with flowers

Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;  
How often placed upon the sick man's brow  
Cool'd it, or laid his feverish pillow smooth!

Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?  
One burden and she would not lighten it?

One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?  
Or when some heat of difference sparkled  
out,

How sweetly would she glide between  
your wraths,

And steal you from each other! for she  
walk'd

Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of  
love,

Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!  
And one—of him I was not bid to speak—

Was always with her, whom you also knew.  
Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.

And these had been together from the first;  
They might have been together till the  
last.

Friends, this frail bark of ours, when  
sorely tried,

May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,  
Without the captain's knowledge: hope  
with me.

Whose shame is that, if he went hence  
with shame?

Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these  
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,  
'My house is left unto me desolate.'

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept;  
but some,

Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than  
those

That knit themselves for summer shadow,  
scowl'd

At their great lord. He, when it seem'd  
he saw

No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but  
fork'd

Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,  
Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-  
like,

Erect: but when the preacher's cadence  
flow'd

Softening thro' all the gentle attributes



Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd  
his face,  
Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth ;  
And "O pray God that he hold up" she  
thought  
"Or surely I shall shame myself and  
him."

"Nor yours the blame — for who be-  
side your hearths  
Can take her place — if echoing me you cry  
'Our house is left unto us desolate !'  
But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou  
known,  
O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-  
stood  
The things belonging to thy peace and  
ours !  
Is there no prophet but the voice that calls  
Doom upon kings, or in the waste 'Re-  
pent' ?  
Is not our own child on the narrow way,  
Who down to those that saunter in the  
broad  
Cries 'come up hither,' as a prophet  
to us ?  
Is there no stoning save with flint and  
rock ?  
Yes, as the dead we weep for testify —  
No desolation but by sword and fire ?  
Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself  
Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.  
Give me your prayers, for he is past your  
prayers,  
Not past the living fount of pity in  
Heaven.  
But I that thought myself long-suffering,  
meek,  
Exceeding 'poor in spirit' — how the  
words  
Have twisted back upon themselves, and  
mean  
Vileness, we are grown so proud — I  
wish'd my voice  
A rushing tempest of the wrath of God  
To blow these sacrifices thro' the world —  
Sent like the twelve-divided concubine  
To inflame the tribes : but there — out  
yonder — earth  
Lightens from her own central Hell — O  
there  
The red fruit of an old idolatry —  
The heads of chiefs and princes fall so fast,  
They cling together in the ghastly sack —  
The land all shambles — naked marriages  
Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd  
France,

By shores that darken with the gathering  
wolf,  
Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.  
Is this a time to madden madness then ?  
Was this a time for these to flaunt their  
pride ?  
May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense  
as those  
Which hid the Holiest from the people's  
eyes  
Ere the great death, shroud this great  
sin from all !  
Doubtless our narrow world must canvass  
it :  
O rather pray for those and pity them,  
Who thro' their own desire accomplish'd  
bring  
Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the  
grave —  
Who broke the bond which they desired  
to break,  
Which else had link'd their race with times  
to come —  
Who wove coarse webs to snare her purity,  
Grossly contriving their dear daughter's  
good —  
Poor souls, and knew not what they did,  
but sat  
Ignorant, devising their own daughter's  
death !  
May not that earthly chastisement suffice ?  
Have not our love and reverence left  
them bare ?  
Will not another take their heritage ?  
Will there be children's laughter in their  
hall  
For ever and for ever, or one stone  
Left on another, or is it a light thing  
That I their guest, their host, their an-  
cient friend,  
I made by these the last of all my race  
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as cried  
Christ ere His agony to those that swore  
Not by the temple but the gold, and made  
Their own traditions God, and slew the  
Lord,  
And left their memories a world's curse  
— 'Behold,  
Your house is left unto you desolate' ?"

Ended he had not, but she brook'd no  
more :  
Long since her heart had beat remorse-  
lessly,  
Her cramped-up sorrow pain'd her, and a  
sense  
Of meanness in her unresisting life.

Then their eyes vext her ; for on entering  
He had cast the curtains of their seat  
aside—

Black velvet of the costliest — she herself  
Had seen to that : fain had she closed  
them now,

Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
Her husband inch by inch, but when she  
laid,

Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he veil'd  
His face with the other, and at once, as  
falls

A creeper when the prop is broken, fell  
The woman shrieking at his feet, and  
swoon'd.

Then her own people bore along the nave  
Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre  
face

Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty  
years :

And her the Lord of all the landscape  
round

Ev'n to his last horizon, and of all  
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd out  
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded ways  
Stumbling across the market to his death,  
Unpitied ; for he groped as blind, and  
seem'd

Always about to fall, grasping the pews  
And oaken finial still he touch'd the door ;  
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot  
stood,

Strode from the porch, tall and erect again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate  
Save under pall with bearers. In one  
month,

Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,  
The childless mother went to seek her  
child ;

And when he felt the silence of his house  
About him, and the change and not the  
change,

And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors  
Staring for ever from their gilded walls  
On him their last descendant, his own  
head

Began to droop, to fall ; the man became  
Imbecile ; his one word was "desolate" ;  
Dead for two years before his death was  
he ;

But when the second Christmas came,  
escaped

His keepers, and the silence which he felt,  
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
By wife and child ; nor wanted at his end

The dark retinue reverencing death  
At golden thresholds ; nor from tender  
hearts,

And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd  
race,

Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.  
Then the great Hall was wholly broken  
down,

And the broad woodland parcell'd into  
farms ;

And where the two contrived their daugh-  
ter's good,

Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made  
his run,

The hedgehog underneath the plantain  
bores,

The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin  
weasel there

Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

### SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred ;  
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan  
child —

One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three  
years old :

They, thinking that her clear germander  
eye

Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,  
Came, with a month's leave given them,  
to the sea :

For which his gains were dock'd, however  
small :

Small were his gains, and hard his work ;  
besides,

Their slender household fortunes (for the  
man

Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,  
Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep :  
And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
Would darken, as he cursed his credu-  
lousness,

And that one unctuous mouth which lured  
him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some Peruvian  
mine.

Now seaward-bound for health they  
gain'd a coast,

All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning  
cave,

At close of day ; slept, woke, and went  
the next,

The Sabbath, pious variers from the  
church,

To chapel ; where a heated pulpiter,  
 Not preaching simple Christ to simple  
 men,  
 Announced the coming doom, and fulmi-  
 nated  
 Against the scarlet woman and her creed :  
 For sideways up he swung his arms, and  
 shriek'd  
 "Thus, thus with violence," ev'n as if  
 he held  
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself  
 Were that great Angel ; "Thus with  
 violence  
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ;  
 Then comes the close." The gentle-  
 hearted wife  
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ;  
 Heathis own : but when the wordy storm  
 Had ended, forth they came and paced  
 the shore,  
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,  
 Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce  
 believed  
 (The sootflake of so many a summer still  
 Clung to their fancies) that they saw,  
 the sea.  
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now  
 on cliff,  
 Lingering about the thymy promontories,  
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the  
 west,  
 And rosed in the east : then homeward  
 and to bed :  
 Where she, who kept a tender Christian  
 hope  
 Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
 Returning, as the bird returns, at night,  
 "Let not the sun go down upon your  
 wrath,"  
 Said, "Love, forgive him" : but he did  
 not speak ;  
 And silenced by that silence lay the wife,  
 Remembering her dear Lord who died for  
 all,  
 And musing on the little lives of men,  
 And how they mar this little by their  
 feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full  
 tide  
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on the  
 foremost rocks  
 Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild sea-  
 smoke,  
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,  
 and fell  
 In vast sea-cataracts — ever and anon

Dead claps of thunder from within the  
 cliffs  
 Heard thro' the living roar. At this the  
 babe,  
 Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd  
 and woke  
 The mother, and the father suddenly cried,  
 "A wreck, a wreck !" then turn'd, and  
 groaning said,

"Forgive ! How many will say, 'for-  
 give,' and find  
 A sort of absolution in the sound  
 To hate a little longer ! No ; the sin  
 That neither God nor man can well for-  
 give,  
 Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
 Is it so true that second thoughts are best ?  
 Not first, and third, which are a riper  
 first ?  
 Too ripe, too late ! they come too late for  
 use.  
 Ah love, there surely lives in man and  
 beast  
 Something divine to warn them of their  
 foes :  
 And such a sense, when first I fronted  
 him,  
 Said, 'trust him not' ; but after, when I  
 came  
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
 less ;  
 Fought with what seem'd my own un-  
 charity ;  
 Sat at his table ; drank his costly wines ;  
 Made more and more allowance for his  
 talk ;  
 Went further, fool ! and trusted him with  
 all,  
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen years  
 Of dust and deskwork : there is no such  
 mine,  
 None ; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,  
 Not making. Ruin'd ! ruin'd ! the sea  
 roars  
 Ruin : a fearful night !"

"Not fearful ; fair,"  
 Said the good wife, "if every star in  
 heaven  
 Can make it fair : you do but hear the  
 tide.  
 Had you ill dreams ?"

"O yes," he said, "I dream'd  
 Of such a tide swelling toward the land,  
 And I from out the boundless outer deep



Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd  
 one  
 Of those dark caves that run beneath the  
 cliffs.  
 I thought the motion of the boundless  
 deep  
 Bore through the cave, and I was heaved  
 upon it  
 In darkness : then I saw one lovely star  
 Larger and larger. 'What a world,' I  
 thought,  
 'To live in !' but in moving on I found  
 Only the landward exit of the cave,  
 Bright with the sun upon the stream be-  
 yond :  
 And near the light a giant woman sat,  
 All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
 A pickaxe in her hand : then out I slipt  
 Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
 As high as heaven, and every bird that  
 sings :  
 And here the night-light flickering in  
 my eyes  
 Awoke me."

"That was then your dream," she said,  
 "Not sad, but sweet."

"So sweet, I lay," said he,  
 "And mused upon it, drifting up the  
 stream  
 In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
 The broken vision ; for I dream'd that still  
 The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
 And that the woman walk'd upon the  
 brink :  
 I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her  
 of it :  
 'It came,' she said, 'by working in the  
 mines' :  
 O then to ask her of my shares, I thought ;  
 And ask'd ; but not a word ; she shook  
 her head.  
 And then the motion of the current ceased,  
 And there was rolling thunder ; and we  
 reach'd  
 A mountain, like a wall of burrs and  
 thorns ;  
 But she with her strong feet up the steep  
 hill  
 Trod out a path : I follow'd ; and at top  
 She pointed seaward : there a fleet of  
 glass,  
 That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
 Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
 That not one moment ceased to thunder,  
 past

In sunshine : right across its track there  
 lay,  
 Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
 Or what seem'd gold : and I was glad at  
 first  
 To think that in our often-ransack'd world  
 Still so much gold was left ; and then I  
 fear'd  
 Lest the gay navy there should splinter  
 on it,  
 And fearing waved my arm to warn them  
 off ;  
 An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
 (I thought I could have died to save it)  
 near'd,  
 Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and van-  
 ish'd, and I woke,  
 I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
 My dream was Life ; the woman honest  
 Work ;  
 And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
 Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold."

"Nay," said the kindly wife to com-  
 fort him,  
 "You raised your arm, you tumbled down  
 and broke  
 The glass with little Margaret's medicine  
 in it ;  
 And, breaking that, you made and broke  
 your dream :  
 A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."

"No trifle," groan'd the husband ;  
 "yesterday  
 I met him suddenly in the street, and  
 ask'd  
 That which I ask'd the woman in my  
 dream.  
 Like her, he shook his head. 'Show me  
 the books !'  
 He dodged me with a long and loose ac-  
 count.  
 'The books, the books !' but he, he could  
 not wait,  
 Bound on a matter he of life and death :  
 When the great Books (see Daniel seven  
 and ten)  
 Were open'd, I should find he meant me  
 well ;  
 And then began to bloat himself, and ooze  
 All over with the fat affectionate smile  
 That makes the widow lean. 'My dear-  
 est friend,  
 Have faith, have faith ! We live by  
 faith,' said he ;  
 'And all things work together for the good



Of those' — it makes me sick to quote  
him — last  
Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-  
you went.

I stood like one that had received a blow :  
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,  
A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,  
A curse in his God-bless-you : then my  
eyes

Pursued him down the street, and far  
away,

Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,  
Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
And scoundrel in the supple - sliding  
knee."

"Was he so bound, poor soul?" said  
the good wife ;

"So are we all : but do not call him,  
love,  
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved,  
forgive.

His gain is loss ; for he that wrongs his  
friend

Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about  
A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and himself  
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd :  
And that drags down his life : then comes  
what comes

Hereafter : and he meant, he said he meant,  
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you  
well."

"With all his conscience and one  
eye askew" —

Love, let me quote these lines, that you  
may learn

A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
Too often, in that silent court of yours —  
'With all his conscience and one eye  
askew,

So false, he partly took himself for true ;  
Whose pious talk, when most his heart  
was dry,

Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his  
eye ;

Who, never naming God except for gain,  
So never took that useful name in vain ;  
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross  
his tool,

And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and  
fool ;

Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he  
forged,

And snakelike slimed his victim ere he  
gorged ;

And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest  
Arising, did his holy oily best,  
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and  
Heaven,

To spread the Word by which himself  
had thriven.'

How like you this old satire ? "

"Nay," she said,

"I loathe it : he had never kindly heart,  
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it.  
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one  
That altogether went to music ? Still  
It awed me."

Then she told it, having dream'd  
Of that same coast.

" — But round the North, a light,  
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor, lay,  
And ever in it a low musical note  
Swell'd up and died ; and, as it swell'd,  
a ridge

Of breaker issued from the belt, and still  
Grew with the growing note, and when  
the note

Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on  
those cliffs

Broke, mixt with awful light (the same  
as that

Living within the belt) whereby she saw  
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs  
no more,

But huge cathedral fronts of every age,  
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,  
One after one : and then the great ridge  
drew,

Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
And past into the belt and swell'd again  
Slowly to music : ever when it broke  
The statues, king or saint, or founder fell ;  
Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin  
left

Came men and women in dark clusters  
round,

Some crying, 'Set them up ! they shall  
not fall !'

And others 'Let them lie, for they have  
fall'n.'

And still they strove and wrangled : and  
she grieved

In her strange dream, she knew not  
why, to find

Their wildest wailings never out of tune  
With that sweet note ; and ever as their  
shrieks

Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave  
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the  
 crowd  
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and  
 show'd their eyes  
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept  
 away  
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of  
 stone,  
 To the waste deeps together.

“Then I fixt

My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
 Both crown'd with stars and high among  
 the stars, —  
 The Virgin Mother standing with her  
 child  
 High up on one of those dark minster-  
 fronts —  
 Till she began to totter, and the child  
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry  
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and  
 I woke,  
 And my dream awed me .— well — but  
 what are dreams ?  
 Yours came but from the breaking of a  
 glass,  
 And mine but from the crying of a child.”

“Child ? No !” said he, “but this  
 tide's roar, and his,  
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,  
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms  
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)  
 Went both to make your dream : but if  
 there were  
 A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
 Sphere-music such as that you dream'd  
 about,  
 Why, that would make our passions far  
 too like  
 The discords dear to the musician. No —  
 One shriek of hate would jar all the  
 hymns of heaven :  
 True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune  
 With nothing but the Devil !”

“‘True’ indeed !

One of our town, but later by an hour  
 Here than ourselves, spoke with me on  
 the shore ;  
 While you were running down the sands,  
 and made  
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow  
 flap,  
 Good man, to please the child. She  
 brought strange news.

Why were you silent when I spoke to-  
 night ?

I had set my heart on your forgiving him  
 Before you knew. We *must* forgive the  
 dead.”

“Dead ! who is dead ?”

“The man your eye pursued.  
 A little after you had parted with him,  
 He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease.”

“Dead ? he ? of heart-disease ? what  
 heart had he  
 To diè of ? dead !”

“Ah, dearest, if there be  
 A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
 And if he did that wrong you charge  
 him with,  
 His angel broke his heart. But your  
 rough voice  
 (You spoke so loud) has roused the child  
 again.  
 Sleep, little birdie, sleep ! will she not sleep  
 Without her ‘little birdie’ ? well then,  
 sleep,  
 And I will sing you ‘birdie.’”

Saying this,  
 The woman half turn'd round from him  
 she loved,  
 Left him one hand, and reaching thro'  
 the night  
 Her other, found (for it was close beside)  
 And half embraced the basket cradle-head  
 With one soft arm, which, like the pliant  
 bough  
 That moving moves the nest and nest-  
 ling, sway'd  
 The cradle, while she sang this baby song.

What does little birdie say  
 In her nest at peep of day ?  
 Let me fly, says little birdie,  
 Mother, let me fly away.  
 Birdie, rest a little longer,  
 Till the little wings are stronger.  
 So she rests a little longer,  
 Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
 In her bed at peep of day ?  
 Baby says, like little birdie,  
 Let me rise and fly away.  
 Baby, sleep a little longer,  
 Till the little limbs are stronger.

If she sleeps a little longer,  
Baby too shall fly away.

"She sleeps: let us too, let all evil, sleep.  
He also sleeps — another sleep than ours.  
He can do no more wrong: forgive him,  
dear,  
And I shall sleep the sounder!"

Then the man,  
"His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to  
come.  
Yet let your sleep for this one night be  
sound:  
I do forgive him!"

"Thanks, my love," she said,  
"Your own will be the sweeter," and  
they slept.

## THE GRANDMOTHER.

### I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you  
say, little Anne?  
Ruddy, and white, and strong on his legs,  
he looks like a man.  
And Willy's wife has written: she never  
was over-wise,  
Never the wife for Willy: he would n't  
take my advice.

### II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not  
the man to save,  
Had n't a head to manage, and drank  
himself into his grave.  
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was  
against it for one.  
Eh! — but he would n't hear me — and  
Willy, you say, is gone.

### III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the  
flower of the flock;  
Never a man could fling him: for Willy  
stood like a rock.  
"Here's a leg for a babe of a week!" says  
doctor; and he would be bound,  
There was not his like that year in twenty  
parishes round.

### IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his  
legs, but still of his tongue!

I ought to have gone before him: I  
wonder he went so young.  
I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not  
long to stay;  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for  
he lived far away.

### V.

Why do you look at me, Annie? you  
think I am hard and cold;  
But all my children have gone before me,  
I am so old:  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep  
for the rest;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have  
wept with the best.

### VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with  
your father, my dear,  
All for a slanderous story, that cost me  
many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost  
me a world of woe,  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy  
years ago.

### VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the  
place, and I knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time: I  
knew, but I would not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering me,  
the base little liar!  
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my  
dear, the tongue is a fire.

### VIII.

And the parson made it his text that  
week, and he said likewise,  
That a lie which is half a truth is ever  
the blackest of lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be met  
and fought with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder  
matter to fight.

### IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm  
for a week and a day;  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it  
was the middle of May.  
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what  
Jenny had been!  
But soiling another, Annie, will never  
make one's self clean.





The Grandmother.

## X.

And I cried myself wellnigh blind, and  
all of an evening late  
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and  
stood by the road at the gate.  
The moon like a rick on fire was rising  
over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside  
me chirrup the nightingale.

## XI.

All of a sudden he stopt : there past by  
the gate of the farm,  
Willy, — he did n't see me, — and Jenny  
hung on his arm.  
Out into the road I started, and spoke I  
scarce knew how ;  
Ah, there's no fool like the old one —  
it makes me angry now.

## XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd  
the thing that he meant ;  
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking  
courtesy and went.  
And I said, "Let us part : in a hundred  
years it'll all be the same,

You cannot love me at all, if you love  
not my good name."

## XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all  
wet, in the sweet moonshine :  
"Sweetheart, I love you so well that  
your good name is mine.  
And what do I care for Jane, let her  
speak of you well or ill ;  
But marry me out of hand : we too shall  
be happy still."

## XIV.

"Marry you, Willy !" said I, "but I  
needs must speak my mind,  
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jeal-  
ous and hard and unkind."  
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms,  
and answer'd, "No, love, no" ;  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy  
years ago.

## XV.

So Willy and I were wedded : I wore a  
lilac gown ;



And the ringers rang with a will, and he  
gave the ringers a crown.  
But the first that ever I bare was dead  
before he was born,  
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie,  
flower and thorn.

## XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I  
thought of death.  
There lay the sweet little body that never  
had drawn a breath.  
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I  
had been a wife ;  
But I wept like a child that day, for the  
babe had fought for his life.

## XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if  
with anger or pain :  
I look'd at the still little body—his  
trouble had all been in vain.  
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him  
another morn :  
But I wept like a child for the child that  
was dead before he was born.

## XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he  
seldom said me nay :  
Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man,  
too, would have his way :  
Never jealous— not he : we had many a  
happy year ;  
And he died, and I could not weep—  
my own time seem'd so near.

## XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that  
I, too, then could have died :  
I began to be tired a little, and fain had  
slept at his side.  
And that was ten years back, or more,  
if I don't forget :  
But as to the children, Annie, they're all  
about me yet.

## XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who  
left me at two,  
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an  
Annie like you :  
Pattering over the boards, she comes and  
goes at her will,  
While Harry is in the five-acre and Char-  
lie ploughing the hill.

## XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too  
— they sing to their team :  
Often they come to the door in a pleasant  
kind of a dream.  
They come and sit by my chair, they  
hover about my bed—  
I am not always certain if they be alive  
or dead.

## XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none  
of them left alive ;  
For Harry went at sixty, your father at  
sixty-five :  
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh three-  
score and ten ;  
I knew them all as babies, and now they  
're elderlier men.

## XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often  
I grieve ;  
I am oftener sitting at home in my fa-  
ther's farm at eve :  
And the neighbors come and laugh and  
gossip, and so do I ;  
I find myself often laughing at things  
that have long gone by.

## XXIV.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins  
should make us sad :  
But mine is a time of peace, and there  
is Grace to be had ;  
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all  
when life shall cease ;  
And in this Book, little Annie, the mes-  
sage is one of Peace.

## XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free  
from pain,  
And happy has been my life ; but I would  
not live it again.  
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and  
long for rest ;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have  
wept with the best.

## XXVI.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-  
born, my flower ;  
But how can I weep for Willy, he has  
but gone for an hour, —

Gone for a minute, my son, from this  
room into the next ;  
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time  
have I to be vext ?

## XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never  
was over-wise.  
Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God  
that I keep my eyes.  
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall  
have past away.  
But stay with the old woman now : you  
cannot have long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER.

## OLD STYLE.

## I.

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä lig-  
gin' 'ere aloän ?  
Noorse ? thoort nowt o' a noorse : whoy,  
Doctor's abeän an' agoän :  
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle : but  
I beänt a fool :  
Git ma my aäle, for I beänt a-gooïn' to  
break my rule.

## II.

Doctors, they knows nowt, for a says  
what 's nawways true :  
Naw soort o' koind o' use to säy the  
things that a do.  
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight  
sin' I beän 'ere,  
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight  
for foorty year.

## III.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin  
'ere o' my bed.  
"The amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issén,  
my friend," a said,  
An' a tow'd ma my sins, an' 's toithe were  
due, an' I gied it in hond ;  
I done my duty by 'm, as I 'a done by  
the lond.

## IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa  
mooch to larn.  
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'boot Bessy  
Marris's bairn.  
Thaw a knaws I hallus voätet wi' Squoire  
an' choorch an staäte,  
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver  
agin the raäte.

## V.

An' I hallus coomed to 's choorch afoormoy  
Sally wur deäd,  
An' 'eerd un a bummin' awaäy loike a  
buzzard-clock \* ower my 'eäd,  
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I  
thowt a 'ad summut to säy,  
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said  
an' l coom'd awaäy.

## VI.

Bessy Marris's bairn ! tha knawsshe laäid  
it to meä.  
Mowt 'a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad  
un, sheä.  
'Siver, I kep 'm, I kep 'm, my lass, tha  
mun understand ;  
I done my duty by 'm as I 'a done by  
the lond.

## VII.

But Parson a comes an' a goos, an' a says  
it eäsy an' freeä  
"The amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issén,  
my friend," says 'eä.  
I weänt säy men be loiärs, thaw summun  
said it in 'aäste :  
But a reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a  
stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

## VIII.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass ? naw,  
naw, tha was not born then ;  
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd 'm  
mysen ;  
Moäst loike a butter-bump, † for I 'eerd  
'm aboot an' aboot,  
But I stubb'd 'm oop wi' the lot, an'  
raäved an' rembled 'm oot.

## IX.

Keäper's it wur ; fo' they fun 'm theer  
a-laäid on 'is faäce  
Doon i' the woild 'enemies ‡ afoor I  
coomed to the plaäce.  
Noäks or Thimbleby — toaner 'ed shot  
'm as deäb as a naäil.  
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but  
git ma my 'aäle.

## X.

Dubbut look at the waäste : theer warn't  
not feäd for a cow ;  
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an'  
look at it now —

\* Cockchafer.

† Bittern.

‡ Anemones.

Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now  
theer's lots o' feeäd,  
Fourscoor yows upon it an' some on it  
doon in seeäd.

## XI.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd  
to 'a stubb'd it at fall,  
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd  
plough thruff it an' all,  
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let  
ma aloän,  
Meä, wi' haäte oonderd haäcre o' Squire's,  
an' lond o' my oän.

## XII.

Do godamoighty know what a's doing  
a-täakin' o' meä ?  
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an'  
yonder a peä ;  
An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a'  
dear a' dear !  
And I 'a managed for Squire come Mich-  
aelmas thutty year.

## XIII.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant nor a  
'aäpoth o' sense,  
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a  
niver mended a fence :  
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an'  
taäke ma now  
Wi' 'aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby  
hoalms to plough !

## XIV.

Loook 'ow quoloty smoiles when they  
seeäs ma a passin' by,  
Says to thessén naw doubt " what a man  
a beä sewer-ly !"  
For they knows what I beän to Squire  
sin fust a comed to the 'All ;  
I done my duty by Squire an' I done  
my duty by hall.

## XV.

Squire's in Lunnon, an' summun I reck-  
ons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä  
thot muddles ma quoit ;  
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver  
give it to Joänes,  
Naw nor a moänt to Robins — a niver  
rembles the stoäns.

## XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap  
wi' 'is kittle o' steäm  
Huzzin' an' mäzin' the blessed feälds  
wi' the Divil's oän teäm.  
If I mun doy I mun doy, an' loife they  
says is sweet,  
But if I mun doy I mun doy, for I  
couldn abear to see it.

## XVII.

What atta stannin' theer for, an' doesn  
bring ma the 'aäle ?  
Doctor's a toättler, lass, an a 's hallus i'  
the owd taäle ;  
I weänt break rules for Doctor, a knows  
naw moor nor a floy ;  
Git ma my 'aäle I tell tha, an' if I  
mun doy I mun doy.

## TITHONUS.

THE woods decay, the woods decay and  
fall,  
The vapors weep their burden to the  
ground,  
Man comes and tills the field and lies  
beneath,  
And after many a summer dies the swan.  
Me only cruel immortality  
Consumes : I wither slowly in thine arms,  
Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a  
dream  
The ever silent spaces of the East,  
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of  
morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a  
man —  
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
Who madest him thy chosen, that he  
seem'd  
To his great heart none other than a God !  
I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality."  
Then didst thou grant mine asking with  
a smile,  
Like wealthy men who care not how they  
give.  
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd  
their wills,  
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted  
me,  
And tho' they could not end me, left me  
maim'd  
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,

Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill  
with tears

To hear me? Let me go: take back thy  
gift:

Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet  
for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there  
comes

A glimpse of that dark world where I was  
born.

Once more the old mysterious glimmer  
steals

From thy pure brows, and from thy  
shoulders pure,

And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the  
gloom,

Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to  
mine,

Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild  
team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,  
arise,

And shake the darkness from their loosen'd  
manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer given  
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy  
tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be  
true?

"The Gods themselves cannot recall their  
gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart  
In days far-off, and with what other  
eyes

I used to watch—if I be he that  
watch'd—

The lucid outline forming round thee;  
saw

The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt  
my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd  
all

Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-  
warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening  
buds

Of April, and could hear the lips that  
kiss'd

Whispering I knew not what of wild and  
sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,  
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:  
How can my nature longer mix with thine?

Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled  
feet

Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when  
the steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the  
homes

Of happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.

Release me, and restore me to the ground;  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my  
grave:

Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by  
morn;

I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

## THE VOYAGE.

### I.

WE left behind the painted buoy  
That tosses at the harbor-mouth;

And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
As fast we fled to the South:

How fresh was every sight and sound  
On open main or winding shore!

We knew the merry world was round,  
And we might sail for evermore.

### II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:

The Lady's-head upon the prow  
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the  
gale.

The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
And swept behind: so quick the run,

We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
We seem'd to sail into the Sun!



## III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
 And burn the threshold of the night,  
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !  
 How oft the purple-skirted robe  
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
 As thro' the slumber of the globe  
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

## IV.

New stars all night above the brim  
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;  
 They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
 Changed every moment as we flew.  
 Far ran the naked moon across  
 The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
 Or flying shone, the silver boss  
 Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

## V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
 High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
 We past long lines of Northern capes  
 And dewy Northern meadows green.  
 We came to warmer waves, and deep  
 Across the boundless east we drove,  
 Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

## VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering  
 brine  
 With ashy rains, that spreading made  
 Fantastic plume or sable pine ;  
 By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
 And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark !  
 At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;  
 At times a carven craft would shoot  
 From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
 With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
 But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

## VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled  
 Down the waste waters day and night,  
 And still we follow'd where she led,  
 In hope to gain upon her flight.

Her face was evermore unseen,  
 And fixt upon the far sea-line ;  
 But each man murmur'd, "O my Queen,  
 I follow till I make thee mine."

## IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
 Like Fancy made of golden air,  
 Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
 Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
 Now high on waves that idly burst  
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the  
 sea,  
 And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
 She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X.

And only one among us — him  
 We pleas'd not — he was seldom  
 pleas'd :  
 He saw not far : his eyes were dim :  
 But ours he swore were all diseased.  
 "A ship of fools," he shriek'd in spite,  
 "A ship of fools," he sneer'd and wept.  
 And overboard one stormy night  
 He cast his body, and on we swept.

## XI.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,  
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;  
 We loved the glories of the world,  
 But laws of nature were our scorn ;  
 For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
 But whence were those that drove the  
 sail  
 Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,  
 And to and thro' the counter-gale ?

## XII.

Again to colder climes we came,  
 For still we follow'd where she led :  
 Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
 And half the crew are sick or dead.  
 But blind or lame or sick or sound  
 We follow that which flies before :  
 We know the merry world is round,  
 And we may sail for evermore.

## IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that flash-  
 est white,  
 Deepening thy voice with the deepening  
 of the night,  
 All along the valley, where thy waters flow,

I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.  
 All along the valley while I walk'd to-day,  
 The two and thirty years were a mist  
 that rolls away ;  
 For all along the valley, down thy rocky  
 bed  
 Thy living voice to me was as the voice  
 of the dead,  
 And all along the valley, by rock and  
 cave and tree,  
 The voice of the dead was a living voice  
 to me.

### THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour  
 I cast to earth a seed.  
 Up there came a flower,  
 The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went  
 Thro' my garden-bower,  
 And muttering discontent  
 Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall  
 It wore a crown of light,  
 But thieves from o'er the wall,  
 Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide  
 By every town and tower,  
 Till all the people cried  
 "Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable :  
 He that runs may read.  
 Most can raise the flowers now,  
 For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,  
 And some are poor indeed ;  
 And now again the people  
 Call it but a weed.

### REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place,  
 Where yon broad water sweetly slowly  
 glides.  
 It sees itself from thatch to base  
 Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die !  
 Her quiet dream of life this hour may  
 cease.  
 Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
 To some more perfect peace.

### THE SAILOR-BOY.

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
 Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,  
 And reach'd the ship and caught the  
 rope,  
 And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud  
 He heard a fierce mermaid cry,  
 "O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,  
 I see the place where thou wilt lie.

"The sands and yeasty surges mix  
 In caves about the dreary bay,  
 And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
 And in thy heart the scrawl shall play."

"Fool," he answer'd, "death is sure  
 To those that stay and those that roam,  
 But I will nevermore endure  
 To sit with empty hands at home.

"My mother clings about my neck,  
 My sisters crying 'Stay for shame' ;  
 My father raves of death and wreck,  
 They are all to blame, they are all to  
 blame.

"God help me ! save I take my part  
 Of danger on the roaring sea,  
 A devil rises in my heart,  
 Far worse than any death to me."

### THE ISLET.

"WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we go,  
 For a score of sweet little summers or so ?"  
 The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
 On the day that follow'd the day she  
 was wed,

"Whither, O whither, love, shall we go ?"  
 And the singer shaking his curly head  
 Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
 There at his right with a sudden crash,  
 Singing, "And shall it be over the seas  
 With a crew that is neither rude nor rash,  
 But a bevy of Erodes apple-cheek'd,  
 In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,  
 With a satin sail of a ruby glow,

To a sweet little Eden on earth that I know,  
A mountain islet pointed and peak'd ;  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,  
Fairly-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,  
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the Sun  
The facets of the glorious mountain flash  
Above the valleys of palm and pine."

"Thither, O thither, love, let us go."

"No, no, no !

For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical  
throat,

And his compass is but of a single note,  
That it makes one weary to hear."

"Mock me not ! mock me not ! love, let  
us go."

"No, love, no.

For the bud ever breaks into bloom on  
the tree,

And a storm never wakes in the lonely sea,  
And a worm is there in the lonely wood,  
That pierces the liver and blackens the  
blood,

And makes it a sorrow to be."

### LITERARY SQUABBLES.

Ah God ! the petty fools of rhyme  
That shriek and sweat in pygmy wars  
Before the stony face of Time,  
And look'd at by the silent stars :

Who hate each other for a song,  
And do their little best to bite  
And pinch their brethren in the throng,  
And scratch the very dead for spite :

And strain to make an inch of room  
For their sweet selves, and cannot hear  
The sullen Lethe rolling doom  
On them and theirs and all things here :

When one small touch of Charity  
Could lift them nearer God-like state  
Than if the crowded Orb should cry  
Like those who cried Diana great :

And I too, talk, and lose the touch  
I talk of. Surely, after all,  
The noblest answer unto such  
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

### THE RINGLET.

"YOUR ringlets, your ringlets,  
That look so golden-gay,  
If you will give me one, but one,  
To kiss it night and day,  
Then never chilling touch of Time  
Will turn it silver-gray ;  
And then shall I know it is all true gold  
To flame and sparkle and stream as of old,  
Till all the comets in heaven are cold,  
And all her stars decay."  
"Then take it, love, and put it by ;  
This cannot change, nor yet can I."

#### 2.

"My ringlet, my ringlet,  
That art so golden-gay,  
Now never chilling touch of Time  
Can turn thee silver-gray ;  
And a lad may wink, and a girl may hint,  
And a fool may say his say ;  
For my doubts and fears were all amiss,  
And I swear henceforth by this and this,  
That a doubt will only come for a kiss,  
And a fear to be kiss'd away."  
"Then kiss it, love, and put it by :  
If this can change, why so can I."

#### II.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I kiss'd you night and day,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You still are golden-gay,  
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You should be silver-gray :  
For what is this which now I'm told,  
I that took you for true gold,  
She that gave you's bought and sold,  
Sold, sold.

#### 2.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She blush'd a rosy red,  
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She clipt you from her head,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She gave you me, and said,  
"Come, kiss it, love, and put it by :  
If this can change, why so can I."  
O fie, you golden nothing, fie  
You golden lie.

#### 3.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I count you much to blame,

For Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
 You put me much to shame,  
 So Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
 I doom you to the flame.  
 For what is this which now I learn,  
 Has given all my faith a turn?  
 Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,  
 Burn, burn.

### A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,  
 Alexandra !

Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
 But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,  
 Alexandra !

Welcome her, thunders of fort and of  
 fleet !

Welcome her, thundering cheer of the  
 street !

Welcome her, all things youthful and  
 sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet !

Break, happy land, into earlier flowers !

Make music, O bird, in the new-budded  
 bowers !

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and  
 prayer !

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is  
 ours !

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare !

Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers !

Flames, on the windy headland flare !

Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire !

Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air !

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire !

Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and  
 higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire !

Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,

Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the strand,

Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's de-  
 sire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,

Blissful bride of a blissful heir,

Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea—

O joy to the people, and joy to the throne,

Come to us, love us and make us your  
 own :

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,

Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,

We are each all Dane in our welcome of  
 thee,

Alexandra !

### ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,  
 In this wide hall with earth's inven-  
 tion stored,

And praise th' invisible universal Lord,  
 Who lets once more in peace the nations  
 meet,

Where Science, Art, and Labor have  
 outpour'd

Their myriad horns of plenty at our  
 feet.

O silent father of our Kings to be  
 Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
 For this, for all, we weep our thanks to  
 thee !

The world-compelling plan was thine,  
 And, lo ! the long laborious miles  
 Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,  
 Rich in model and design ;  
 Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
 Loom and wheel and engin'ry,  
 Secrets of the sullen mine,  
 Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
 Fabric rough, or Fairy fine,  
 Sunny tokens of the Line,  
 Polar marvels, and a feast  
 Of wonder, out of West and East,  
 And shapes and hues of Art divine !  
 All of beauty, all of use,  
 That one fair planet can produce.

Brought from under every star,  
 Blown from over every main,  
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
 The works of peace with works of war.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who  
 reign,

From growing commerce loose her latest  
 chain,

And let the fair white-winged peace-  
 maker fly

To happy havens under all the sky,  
 And mix the seasons and the golden  
 hours,

Till each man finds his own in all men's  
 good,

And all men work in noble brotherhood,  
 Breaking their mailed fleets and armed  
 towers,

And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,  
 And gathering all the fruits of peace  
 and crown'd with all her flowers.



## DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true — no truer Time  
himself  
Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore  
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life  
Shoots to the fall — take this, and pray  
that he,  
Who wrote it, honoring your sweet faith  
in him,  
May trust himself; and spite of praise  
and scorn,

As one who feels the immeasurable world,  
Attain the wise indifference of the wise;  
And after Autumn past — if left to  
pass  
His autumn into seeming-leafless days —  
Draw toward the long frost and longest  
night,  
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the  
fruit  
Which in our winter woodland looks a  
flower.\*

\* The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*.)

## EXPERIMENTS.

## BOADICEA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those  
Neronian legionaries  
Burnt and broke the grove and altar of  
the Druid and Druidess,  
Far in the East Boadicea, standing loftily  
charioted,  
Mad and maddening all that heard her  
in her fierce volubility,  
Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near  
the colony C  mulod  ne,  
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters  
o'er a wild confederacy.

“They that scorn the tribes and call  
us Britain's barbarous populaces,  
Did they hear me, would they listen,  
did they pity me supplicating?  
Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall  
I brook to be supplicated?  
Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Cori-  
tanian, Trinobant!  
Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak  
and talon annihilate us?  
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it  
gorily quivering?  
Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark  
and blacken innumerable,  
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make  
the carcass a skeleton,  
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from  
the wilderness, wallow in it,  
Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Tara-  
nis be propitiated.  
Lo their colony half-defended! lo their  
colony, C  mulod  ne!

There the horde of Roman robbers mock  
at a barbarous adversary.  
There the hive of Roman liars worship a  
gluttonous emperor-idiot.  
Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear  
it, Spirit of C  ssiv  laun!

“Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard  
it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!  
Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd,  
Catieuchlanian, Trinobant.  
These have told us all their anger in  
miraculous utterances,  
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a mur-  
mur heard a  rially,  
Phantom sound of blows descending,  
moan of an enemy massacred,  
Phantom wail of women and children,  
multitudinous agonies.  
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phan-  
tom bodies of horses and men;  
Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on  
the refluent estuary;  
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly gid-  
dily tottering —  
There was one who watch'd and told me  
—down their statue of Victory fell.  
Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo  
the colony C  mulod  ne,  
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall  
we care to be pitiful?  
Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall  
we dandle it amorously?

“Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear  
Coritanian, Trinobant!

While I roved about the forest, long  
and bitterly meditating,  
There I heard them in the darkness, at  
the mystical ceremony,  
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang  
the terrible prophetesses.  
'Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle  
of silvery parapets !  
Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho'  
the gathering enemy narrow thee,  
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle,  
thou shalt be the mighty one yet !  
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine  
the deeds to be celebrated,  
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light  
and shadow illimitable,  
Thine the lands of lastingsummer, many-  
blossoming Paradises,  
Thine the North and thine the South and  
thine the battle-thunder of God.'  
So they chanted : how shall Britain light  
upon auguries happier ?  
So they chanted in the darkness, and  
there cometh a victory now.

"Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear  
Coritanian, Trinobant !  
Me the wife of rich Prasutagus, me the  
lover of liberty,  
Me they seized and me they tortured,  
me they lash'd and humiliated,  
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine  
of ruffian violators !  
See they sit, they hide their faces, mis-  
erable in ignominy !  
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by  
blood to be satiated.  
Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the col-  
ony Cámulodúne !  
There they ruled, and thence they wasted  
all the flourishing territory,  
Thither at their will they haled the yel-  
low-ringleted Britoness —  
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe,  
unexhausted, inexorable.  
Shout Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout  
Coritanian, Trinobant,  
Till the victim hear within and yearn  
to hurry precipitously  
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like  
the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.  
Lo the colony, there they rioted in the  
city of Cánobelíne !  
There they drank in cups of emerald,  
there at tables of ebony lay,  
Rolling on their purple couches in their  
tender effeminacy.

There they dwelt and there they rioted ;  
there—there—they dwell no more.  
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces,  
break the works of the statuary.  
Take the hoary Roman head and shatter  
it, hold it abominable,  
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust  
and voluptuousness,  
Lash the maiden into swooning, me they  
lash'd and humiliated,  
Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash  
the brains of the little one out,  
Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my  
chargers, trample them under us."

So the Queen Boádicéa, standing loftily  
charioted,  
Brandishing in her hand a dart and roll-  
ing glances lioness-like,  
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters  
in her fierce volubility.  
Till her people all around the royal  
chariot agitated,  
Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing  
barbarous lineáments,  
Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when  
they shiver in January,  
Roar'd as when the rolling breakers boom  
and blanch on the precipices,  
Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear  
an oak on a promontory.  
So the silent colony hearing her tumul-  
tuous adversaries  
Clash the darts and on the buckler beat  
with rapid unanimous hand,  
Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all  
her pitiless avarice,  
Till she felt the heart within her fall and  
flutter tremulously,  
Then her pulses at the clamoring of her  
enemy fainted away.  
Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny  
tyranny buds.  
Ran the land with Roman slaughter,  
multitudinous agonies.  
Perish'd many a maid and matron, many  
a valorous legionary.  
Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London,  
Verulam, Cámulodúne.

## IN QUANTITY.

MILTON.

*Alcaics.*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmo-  
nies,  
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,

God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
Milton, a name to resound for ages ;  
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armo-  
ries,

Tower, as the deep-domed empyræan  
Rings to the roar of an angel on-  
set —

Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
And bloom profuse and cedar arches

Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
Where some refulgent sunset of India  
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
And crimson-hued the stately palm-  
woods

Whisper in odorous heights of even.

*Heptasyllabics.*

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears  
him,

Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
Should I flounder awhile without a tum-  
ble

Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
They should speak to me not without a  
welcome,

All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tum-  
ble,

So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor  
believe me

Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.  
O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —  
Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —  
As some rare little rose, a piece of in-  
most

Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
Maiden not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION  
OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK  
VERSE.

So Hector said, and sea-like roar'd his  
host ;

Then loosed their sweating horses from  
the yoke,

And each beside his chariot bound his own ;  
And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep  
In haste they drove, and honey-hearted  
wine

And bread from out the houses brought,  
and heap'd

Their firewood, and the winds from off  
the plain

Roll'd the rich vapor far into the heaven.  
And these all night upon the bridge\* of  
war

Sat glorying ; many a fire before them  
blazed :

As when in heaven the stars about the  
moon

Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,  
And every height comes out, and jutting  
peak

And valley, and the immeasurable heav-  
ens

Break open to their highest, and all the  
stars

Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his  
heart :

So many a fire between the ships and  
stream

Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of  
Troy,

A thousand on the plain ; and close by each  
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire ;

And champing golden grain, the horses  
stood

Hard by their chariots, waiting for the  
dawn.†

*Iliad VIII. 542-561.*

\* Or, ridge.

† Or more literally, —

And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds  
Stood by their cars, waiting the thrond morn.

# ADDITIONAL POEMS.

NOTE. — The Poems which follow include all those which have been omitted by the author from his latest revised editions, or never acknowledged by him. They are here printed, because, although unsanctioned by Mr. Tennyson, they have recently been collected from various sources, and printed *in America*.

## TIMBUCTOO.\*

"Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies  
A mystic city, goal of high emprise."  
CHAPMAN.

I STOOD upon the Mountain which o'er-  
looks

The narrow seas, whose rapid interval  
Parts Afric from green Europe, when  
the Sun

Had fall'n below th' Atlantic, and above  
The silent heavens were blench'd with  
faery light,

Uncertain whether faery light or cloud,  
Flowing Southward, and the chasms of  
deep, deep blue

Slumber'd unfathomable, and the stars  
Were flooded over with clear glory and pale.  
I gazed upon the sheeny coast beyond,  
There where the Giant of old Time infix'd  
The limits of his prowess, pillars high  
Long time erased from earth : even as  
the Sea

When weary of wild inroad buildeth up  
Huge mounds whereby to stay his yeasty  
waves.

And much I mused on legends quaint  
and old

Which whilome won the hearts of all on  
earth

Toward their brightness, ev'n as flame  
draws air ;

But had their being in the heart of man  
As air is th' life of flame : and thou wert  
then

A centred glory-circled memory,  
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves  
Have buried deep, and thou of later name,  
Imperial Eldorado, roof'd with gold :  
Shadows to which, despite all shocks of  
change,

All on-set of capricious accident,  
Men clung with yearning hope which  
would not die.

As when in some great city where the walls  
Shake, and the streets with ghastly faces  
thronged,

Do utter forth a subterranean voice,  
Among the inner columns far retired  
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,  
Before the awful genius of the place  
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep faith,  
the while

Above her head the weak lamp dips and  
winks

Unto the fearful summoning without :  
Nathless she ever clasps the marble knees,  
Bathes the cold hand with tears, and  
gazeth on

Those eyes which wear no light but that  
wherewith

Her fantasy informs them.

Where are ye,  
Thrones of the Western wave, fair Isl-  
ands green ?

Where are your moonlight halls, your  
cedarn glooms,

The blossoming abysses of your hills ?  
Your flowering capes, and your gold-  
sanded bays

Blown round with happy airs of odorous  
winds ?

Where are the infinite ways, which,  
seraph-trod,

Wound through your great Elysian soli-  
tudes,

Whose lowest deeps were, as with visible  
love,

Filled with Divine effulgence, circum-  
fused,

Flowing between the clear and polished  
stems,

And ever circling round their emerald  
cones

In coronals and glories, such as gird  
The unfading foreheads of the Saints in  
Heaven ?

For nothing visible, they say, had birth  
In that blest ground, but it was played  
about

\* A Poem which obtained the Chancellor's Medal at  
the Cambridge Commencement, MDCCCXIX. By  
A. TENNYSON, of Trinity College.



With its peculiar glory. Then I raised  
My voice and cried, "Wide Afric, doth  
thy Sun

Lighten, thy hills enfold a city as fair  
As those which starred the night o' the  
elder world?

Or is the rumor of thy Timbuctoo  
A dream as frail as those of ancient time?"

A curve of whitening, flashing, ebbing  
light!

A rustling of white wings! the bright  
descent

Of a young Seraph! and he stood beside me  
There on the ridge, and looked into my  
face

With his unutterable, shining orbs,  
So that with hasty motion I did veil  
My vision with both hands, and saw be-  
fore me

Such colored spots as dance athwart the  
eyes

Of those that gaze upon the noonday Sun.  
Girt with a zone of flashing gold beneath  
His breast, and compassed round about  
his brow

With triple arch of everchanging bows,  
And circled with the glory of living light  
And alternation of all hues, he stood.

"O child of man, why muse you here  
alone

Upon the Mountain, on the dreams of old  
Which filled the earth with passing love-  
liness,

Which flung strange music on the howl-  
ing winds,

And odors rapt from remote Paradise?  
Thy sense is clogged with dull mortality:  
Open thine eyes and see."

I looked, but not  
Upon his face, for it was wonderful  
With its exceeding brightness, and the  
light

Of the great Angel Mind which looked  
from out

The starry glowing of his restless eyes.  
I felt my soul grow mighty, and my spirit  
With supernatural excitation bound  
Within me, and my mental eye grew large  
With such a vast circumference of  
thought,

That in my vanity I seemed to stand  
Upon the outward verge and bound alone  
Of full beatitude. Each failing sense,  
As with a momentary flash of light,  
Grew thrillingly distinct and keen. I saw  
The smallest grain that dappled the dark  
earth,

The indistinctest atom in deep air,  
The Moon's white cities, and the opal  
width

Of her small glowing lakes, her silver  
heights

Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,  
And the unsounded, undescended depth  
Of her black hollows. The clear galaxy  
Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonderful,  
Distinct and vivid with sharp points of  
light,

Blaze within blaze, an unimagined depth  
And harmony of planet-girded suns  
And moon-encircled planets, wheel in  
wheel,

Arched the wan sapphire. Nay — the  
hum of men,

Or other things talking in unknown  
tongues,

And notes of busy life in distant worlds  
Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear.

A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling  
thoughts,

Involving and embracing each with each,  
Rapid as fire, inextricably linked,  
Expanding momentarily with every sight  
And sound which struck the palpitating  
sense,

The issue of strong impulse, hurried  
through

The riven rapt brain; as when in some  
large lake

From pressure of descendent crags, which  
lapse

Disjointed, crumbling from their parent  
slope

At slender interval, the level calm  
Is ridged with restless and increasing  
spheres

Which break upon each other, each th'  
effect

Of separate impulse, but more fleet and  
strong

Than its precursor, till the eye in vain  
Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade  
Dappled with hollow and alternate rise  
Of interpenetrated arc, would scan  
Definite round.

I know not if I shape  
These things with accurate similitude  
From visible objects, for but dimly now,  
Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream,  
The memory of that mental excellence  
Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine  
The indecision of my present mind  
With its past clearness, yet it seems to me  
As even then the torrent of quick thought

Absorbed me from the nature of itself  
With its own fleetness. Where is he,  
that borne

Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,  
Could link his shallow to the fleeting edge,  
And muse midway with philosophic calm  
Upon the wondrous laws which regulate  
The fierceness of the bounding element ?

My thoughts which long had grovelled  
in the slime

Of this dull world, like dusky worms  
which house

Beneath unshaken waters, but at once  
Upon some earth-awakening day of Spring  
Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft  
Winnow the purple, bearing on both  
sides

Double display of star-lit wings, which  
burn

Fan-like and fibred with intensest bloom ;  
Even so my thoughts erewhile so low,  
now felt

Unutterable buoyancy and strength  
To bear them upward through the track-  
less fields

Of undefined existence far and free.

Then first within the South methought  
I saw

A wilderness of spires, and crystal pile  
Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome,  
Illimitable range of battlement  
On battlement, and the Imperial height  
Of canopy o'er-canopied.

Behind

In diamond light up spring the dazzling  
peaks

Of Pyramids, as far surpassing earth's  
As heaven than earth is fairer. Each  
aloft

Upon his narrowed eminence bore globes  
Of wheeling suns, or stars, or semblances  
Of either, showering circular abyss  
Of radiance. But the glory of the place  
Stood out a pillared front of burnished  
gold,

Interminably high, if gold it were  
Or metal more ethereal, and beneath  
Two doors of blinding brilliance, where  
no gaze

Might rest, stood open, and the eye could  
scan,

Through length of porch and valve and  
boundless hall,

Part of a throne of fiery flame, wherefrom  
The snowy skirting of a garment hung,  
And glimpse of multitude of multitudes  
That ministered around it — if I saw

These things distinctly, for my human  
brain

Staggered beneath the vision, and thick  
night

Came down upon my eyelids, and I fell.

With ministering hand he raised me up :  
Then with a mournful and ineffable smile,  
Which but to look on for a moment filled  
My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,  
In accents of majestic melody,

Like a swollen river's gushings in still night  
Mingled with floating music, thus he  
spake :

“ There is no mightier Spirit than I to  
sway

The heart of man ; and teach him to attain  
By shadowing forth the Unattainable ;  
And step by step to scale that mighty stair  
Whose landing-place is wrapt about with  
clouds

Of glory of heaven.\* With earliest light  
of Spring,

And in the glow of sallow Summertime,  
And in red Autumn when the winds are  
wild

With gambols, and when full-voiced  
Winter roofs

The headland with inviolate white snow,  
I play about his heart a thousand ways,  
Visit his eyes with visions, and his ears  
With harmonies of wind and wave and  
wood,

— Of winds which tell of waters, and of  
waters

Betraying the close kisses of the wind —  
And win him unto me : and few there be  
So gross of heart who have not felt and  
known

A higher than they see : they with dim eyes  
Behold me darkling. Lo ! I have given  
thee

To understand my presence, and to feel  
My fulness : I have filled thy lips with  
power.

I have raised thee nigher to the spheres  
of heaven,

Man's first, last home : and thou with  
ravished sense

Listenest the lordly music flowing from  
The illimitable years. I am the Spirit,  
The permeating life which courseth  
through

All th' intricate and labyrinthine veins  
Of the great vine of Fable, which, out-  
spread

\* “ Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

With growth of shadowing leaf and clusters rare,  
 Reacheth to every corner under heaven,  
 Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth ;  
 So that men's hopes and fears take refuge in  
 The fragrance of its complicated glooms,  
 And cool impeachéd twilights. Child of  
 man,  
 Seest thou yon river, whose translucent  
 wave,  
 Forth issuing from the darkness, windeth  
 through  
 The argent streets o' the city, imaging  
 The soft inversion of her tremulous domes,  
 Her gardens frequent with the stately  
 palm,  
 Her pagodshung with music of sweet bells,  
 Her obelisks of ranged chrysolite,  
 Minarets and towers ? Lo ! how he pass-  
 eth by,  
 And gulfs himself in sands, as not en-  
 during

To carry through the world those waves,  
 which bore  
 The reflex of my city in their depth.  
 O city ! O latest throne ! where I was  
 raised  
 To be a mystery of loveliness  
 Unto all eyes, the time is wellnigh come  
 When I must render up this glorious home  
 To keen Discovery ; soon yon brilliant  
 towers  
 Shall darken with the waving of her wand ;  
 Darken and shrink and shiver into huts,  
 Black specks amid a waste of dreary sand,  
 Low-built, mud-walled, barbarian settle-  
 ments.  
 How changed from this fair city !"  
 Thus far the Spirit :  
 Then parted heavenward on the wing :  
 and I  
 Was left alone on Calpe, and the moon  
 Had fallen from the night, and all was  
 dark !

## POEMS PUBLISHED IN THE EDITION OF 1830, AND OMITTED IN LATER EDITIONS.

### ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the  
 broad valley dimmed in the gloam-  
 ing :  
 Thro' the black-stemmed pines only the  
 far river shines.  
 Creeping through blossomy rushes and  
 bowers of rose-blowing bushes,  
 Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble  
 and fall.  
 Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly ; the  
 grasshopper carollethe clearly ;  
 Deeply the turtle cooes ; shrilly the owl  
 halloos ;  
 Winds creep : dews fall chilly : in her first  
 sleep earth breathes stilly :  
 Over the pools in the burn watergnats  
 murmur and mourn.  
 Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmer-  
 ing water outfloweth :  
 Twin peaks shadowed with pine slope to  
 the dark hyaline.  
 Low-throned Hesper is stayéd between  
 the two peaks ; but the Naiad  
 Throbbing in wild unrest holds him be-  
 neath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth that Hesperus  
 all things bringeth,  
 Smoothing the wearied mind : bring me  
 my love, Rosalind.  
 Thou comest morning and even ; she com-  
 eth not morning or even.  
 False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my  
 sweet Rosalind ?

### THE "HOW" AND THE "WHY."

?

I AM any man's suitor,  
 If any will be my tutor :  
 Some say this life is pleasant,  
 Some think it speedeth fast,  
 In time there is no present,  
 In eternity no future,  
 In eternity no past.  
 We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,  
 Who will riddle me the *how* and the  
*why* ?

The bulrush nods unto its brother.  
 The wheatears whisper to each other :



What is it they say? what do they there?  
 Why two and two make four? why round  
     is not square?  
 Why the rock stands still, and the light  
     clouds fly?  
 Why the heavy oak groans, and the white  
     willows sigh?  
 Why deep is not high, and high is not deep?  
 Whether we wake, or whether we sleep?  
 Whether we sleep, or whether we die?  
 How you are you? why I am I?  
 Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why*?

The world is somewhat; it goes on some-  
     how:

But what is the meaning of *then* and *now*?  
 I feel there is something; but how  
     and what?

I know there is somewhat: but what and  
     why?

I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.  
 The little bird pipeth — “why? why?”  
 In the summer woods when the sun falls  
     low,

And the great bird sits on the opposite  
     bough,  
 And stares in his face, and shouts “how?  
     how?”

And the black owl scuds down the mel-  
     low twilight,  
 And chants “how? how?” the whole  
     of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is spilt?  
 What the life is? where the soul may lie?  
 Why a church is with a steeple built:  
 And a house with a chimney-pot?  
 Who will riddle me the how and the what?  
 Who will riddle me the what and the  
     why?

### SUSPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND NOT  
 IN UNITY WITH ITSELF.

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.  
 I faint, I fall. Men say that thou  
 Didst die for me, for such as *me*,  
 Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,  
 And that my sin was as a thorn  
 Among the thorns that girt thy brow,  
 Wounding thy soul. — That even now,  
 In this extremest misery  
 Of ignorance, I should require  
 A sign! and if a bolt of fire  
 Would rive the slumberous summer noon

While I do pray to thee alone,  
 Think my belief would stronger grow!  
 Is not my human pride brought low?  
 The boastings of my spirit still?  
 The joy I had in my free will  
 All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown?  
 And what is left to me, but thou,  
 And faith in thee? Men pass me by;  
 Christians with happy countenances —  
 And children all seem full of thee!  
 And women smile with saintlike glances  
 Like thine own mother's when she bowed  
 Above thee, on that happy morn  
 When angels spake to men aloud,  
 And thou and peace to earth were born.  
 Goodwill to me as well as all —  
 — I one of them: my brothers they:  
 Brothers in Christ — a world of peace  
 And confidence, day after day;  
 And trust and hope till things should  
     cease,  
 And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!  
 To hold a common scorn of death!  
 And at a burial to hear  
 The creaking cords which wound and eat  
 Into my human heart, when'er  
 Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,  
 With hopeful grief, were passing sweet!  
 A grief not uninformed, and dull,  
 Hearted with hope, of hope as full  
 As is the blood with life, or night  
 And a dark cloud with rich moonlight.  
 To stand beside a grave, and see  
 The red small atoms wherewith we  
 Are built, and smile in calm, and say —  
 “These little motes and grains shall be  
 Clothed on with immortality  
 More glorious than the noon of day.  
 All that is pass'd into the flowers,  
 And into beasts and other men,  
 And all the Norland whirlwind showers  
 From open vaults, and all the sea  
 O'erwashes with sharp salts, again  
 Shall fleet together all, and be  
 Indued with immortality.”

Thrice happy state again to be  
 The trustful infant on the knee!  
 Who lets his waxen fingers play  
 About his mother's neck, and knows  
 Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.  
 They comfort him by night and day,  
 They light his little life away;  
 He hath no thought of coming woes;  
 He hath no care of life or death,



Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
Because the Spirit of happiness  
And perfect rest so inward is ;  
And loveth so his innocent heart,  
Her temple and her place of birth,  
Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
Life of the fountain there, beneath  
Its salient springs, and far apart,  
Hating to wander out on earth,  
Or breathe into the hollow air,  
Whose chillness would make visible  
Her subtile, warm, and golden breath,  
Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
Full fills him with beatitude.  
Oh ! sure it is a special care  
Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
To arm in proof, and guard about  
With triple mailed trust, and clear  
Delight, the infant's dawning year.  
Would that my gloomed fancy were  
As thine, my mother, when with brows  
Propped on thy knees, my hands upheld  
In thine, I listened to thy vows,  
For me outpoured in holiest prayer —  
For me unworthy ! — and beheld  
The mild deep eyes upraised, that knew  
The beauty and repose of faith,  
And the clear spirit shining through.  
Oh ! wherefore do we grow awry  
From roots which strike so deep ? why dare  
Paths in the desert ? Could not I  
Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,  
To th' earth — until the ice would melt  
Here, and I feel as thou hast felt ?  
What Devil had the heart to scathe  
Flowers thou hadst reared — to brush the  
dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave  
Was deep, my mother, in the clay ?  
Myself ? Is it thus ? Myself ? Had I  
So little love for thee ? But why  
Prevailed not thy pure prayers ? Why pray  
To one who heeds not, who can save  
But will not ? Great in faith, and strong  
Against the grief of circumstance  
Wert thou, and yet unheard ? What if  
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
Through utter dark a full-sailed skiff,  
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
Unto the death, not sunk ! I know  
At matins and at evensong,  
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,  
In deep and daily prayers wouldst strive  
To reconcile me with thy God.  
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
At heart, thou wouldst murmur still —

“ Bring this lamb back into thy fold,  
My Lord, if so it be thy will.”  
Wouldst tell me I must brook the rod,  
And chastisement of human pride ;  
That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
Betwixt me and the light of God !  
That hitherto I had defied,  
And had rejected God — that Grace  
Would drop from his o'erbrimming love,  
As manna on my wilderness,  
If I would pray — that God would move  
And strike the hard, hard rock, and  
thence,  
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
Would issue tears of penitence  
Which would keep green hope's life.  
Alas !

I think that pride hath now no place  
Or sojourn in me. I am void,  
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then ? Why not yet  
Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
Hath moored and rested ? Ask the sea  
At midnight, when the crisp slope waves  
After a tempest, rib and fret  
The broad-imbasé beach, why he  
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn ?  
Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
And ripples of an inland meer ?  
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
Draw down into his vexéd pools  
All that blue heaven which hues and paves  
The other ? I am too forlorn,  
Too shaken : my own weakness fools  
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

“ Yet,” said I, in my morn of youth,  
The unsunned freshness of my strength,  
When I went forth in quest of truth,  
“ It is man's privilege to doubt,  
If so be that from doubt at length,  
Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,  
An image with profulgent brows,  
And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
Of running fires and fluid range  
Of lawless airs at last stood out  
This excellence and solid form  
Of constant beauty. For the Ox  
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
The hornéd valleys all about,  
And hollows of the fringed hills  
In summerheats, with placid lows  
Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
About his hoof. And in the flocks  
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,

And raceth freely with his fere,  
 And answers to his mother's calls  
 From the flowered furrow. In a time,  
 Of which he wots not, run short pains  
 Through his warm heart : and then, from  
 whence

He knows not, on his light there falls  
 A shadow ; and his native slope  
 Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
 Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
 And something in the darkness draws  
 His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
 Shall men live thus, in joy and hope  
 As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
 Living, but that he shall live on ?  
 Shall we not look into the laws  
 Of life and death, and things that seem,  
 And things that be, and analyze  
 Our double nature, and compare  
 All creeds till we have found the one,  
 If one there be ? " Ay me ! I fear  
 All may not doubt, but everywhere  
 Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,  
 Whom call I Idol ? Let thy dove  
 Shadow me over, and my sins  
 Be unremembered, and thy love  
 Enlighten me. O teach me yet  
 Somewhat before the heavy clod  
 Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
 Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
 In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life ! O weary death !  
 O spirit and heart made desolate !  
 O damned vacillating state !

### THE BURIAL OF LOVE.

His eyes in eclipse,  
 Pale-cold his lips,  
 The light of his hopes unfed,  
 Mute his tongue,  
 His bow unstrung  
 With the tears he hath shed,  
 Backward drooping his graceful head,  
 Love is dead :  
 His last arrow is sped ;  
 He hath not another dart ;  
 Go — carry him to his dark deathbed ;  
 Bury him in the cold, cold heart —  
 Love is dead.

O truest love ! art thou forlorn,  
 And unrevenged ? thy pleasant wiles  
 Forgotten, and thine innocent joy ?  
 Shall hollow-hearted apathy,

The cruellest form of perfect scorn,  
 With languor of most hateful smiles,  
 For ever write,  
 In the withered light  
 Of the tearless eye,  
 An epitaph that all may spy ?  
 No ! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,  
 Northround sun shine that shineth to all ;  
 Her light shall into darkness change ;  
 For her the green grass shall not spring,  
 Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet birds  
 sing,  
 Till Love have his full revenge.

TO ———.

SAINTED Juliet ! dearest name !  
 If to love be life alone,  
 Divinest Juliet,  
 I love thee, and live ; and yet  
 Love unreturned is like the fragrant  
 flame  
 Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice  
 Offered to gods upon an altar-throne ;  
 My heart is lighted at thine eyes,  
 Changed into fire, and blown about with  
 sighs.

### SONG.

I.

I' THE glooming light  
 Of middle night  
 So cold and white,  
 Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning wave,  
 Beside her are laid  
 Her mattock and spade,  
 For she hath half delved her own deep  
 grave.  
 Alone she is there :  
 The white clouds drizzle : her hair falls  
 loose :  
 Her shoulders are bare ;  
 Her tears are mixed with the beaded  
 dews.

II.

Death standeth by ;  
 She will not die ;  
 With glazed eye  
 She looks at her grave : she cannot sleep ;  
 Ever alone  
 She maketh her moan :  
 She cannot speak : she can only weep,

For she will not hope.  
The thick snow falls on her flake by  
flake,  
The dull wave mourns down  
the slope,  
The world will not change, and her heart  
will not break.

SONG.

I.

THE lintwhite and the throstlecock  
Have voices sweet and clear ;  
All in the blooméd May.  
They from the blosmy brere  
Call to the fleeting year,  
If that he would them hear  
And stay.  
Alas ! that one so beautiful  
Should have so dull an ear !

II.

Fair year, fair year, thy children call,  
But thou art deaf as death ;  
All in the blooméd May.  
When thy light perisheth  
That from thee issueth,  
Our life evanisheth :  
O, stay !  
Alas ! that lips so cruel-dumb  
Should have so sweet a breath !

III.

Fair year, with brows of royal love  
Thou comest, as a king,  
All in the blooméd May.  
Thy golden largess fling,  
And longer hear us sing ;  
Though thou art fleet of wing,  
Yet stay.  
Alas ! that eyes so full of light  
Should be so wandering !

IV.

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen  
In rings of gold yronne,\*  
All in the blooméd May.  
We pri'thee pass not on ;  
If thou dost leave the sun,  
Delight is with thee gone.  
O, stay !  
Thou art the fairest of thy feres,  
We pri'thee pass not on.

\* "His crispé hair in ringis was yronne."  
CHAUCER, *Knights Tale*.

SONG.

I.

EVERY day hath its night :  
Every night its morn :  
Thorough dark and bright  
Winged hours are borne ;  
Ah ! welaway !  
Seasons flower and fade ;  
Golden calm and storm  
Mingle day by day.  
There is no bright form  
Doth not cast a shade —  
Ah ! welaway !

II.

When we laugh, and our mirth  
Apes the happy vein,  
We're so kin to earth,  
Pleasaunce fathers pain —  
Ah ! welaway !  
Madness laugheth loud :  
Laughter bringeth tears :  
Eyes are worn away  
Till the end of fears  
Cometh in the shroud,  
Ah ! welaway !

III.

All is change, woe or weal ;  
Joy is Sorrow's brother ;  
Grief and gladness steal  
Symbols of each other :  
Ah ! welaway !  
Larks in heaven's cope  
Sing : the culvers mourn  
All the livelong day.  
Be not all forlorn :  
Let us weep in hope —  
Ah ! welaway !

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of flowing  
Under my eye ?  
When will the wind be aweary of blowing  
Over the sky ?  
When will the clouds be aweary of fleeting ?  
When will the heart be aweary of beating ?  
And nature die ?  
Never, O never ! nothing will die ;  
The stream flows,  
The wind blows,  
The cloud fleets,  
The heart beats,  
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;  
 All things will change  
 Through eternity.  
 'T is the world's winter ;  
 Autumn and summer  
 Are gone long ago.  
 Earth is dry to the centre,  
 But spring a new comer —  
 A spring rich and strange,  
 Shall make the winds blow  
 Round and round,  
 Through and through,  
 Here and there,  
 Till the air  
 And the ground  
 Shall be filled with life anew.  
 The world was never made ;  
 It will change, but it will not fade.  
 So let the wind range ;  
 For even and morn  
 Ever will be  
 Through eternity.  
 Nothing was born ;  
 Nothing will die ;  
 All things will change.

## ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flow-  
 ing  
 Under my eye ;  
 Warmly and broadly the south winds are  
 blowing  
 Over the sky.  
 One after another the white clouds are  
 fleeting ;  
 Every heart this May morning in joyance  
 is beating  
 Full merrily ;  
 Yet all things must die.  
 The stream will cease to flow ;  
 The wind will cease to blow ;  
 The clouds will cease to fleet ;  
 The heart will cease to beat ;  
 For all things must die.

All things must die.  
 Spring will come nevermore.  
 O, vanity !  
 Death waits at the door.  
 See ! our friends are all forsaking  
 The wine and merrymaking.  
 We are called — we must go.  
 Laid low, very low,  
 In the dark we must lie.  
 The merry glees are still ;

The voice of the bird  
 Shall no more be heard,  
 Nor the wind on the hill.  
 O, misery !  
 Hark ! death is calling  
 While I speak to ye,  
 The jaw is falling,  
 The red cheek paling,  
 The strong limbs failing ;  
 Ice with the warm blood mixing ;  
 The eyeballs fixing.  
 Nine times goes the passing bell :  
 Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth  
 Had a birth,  
 As all men know  
 Long ago.  
 And the old earth must die.  
 So let the warm winds range,  
 And the blue wave beat the shore ;  
 For even and morn  
 Ye will never see  
 Through eternity.  
 All things were born.  
 Ye will come nevermore,  
 For all things must die.

## HERO TO LEANDER.

O go not yet, my love !  
 The night is dark and vast ;  
 The white moon is hid in her heaven  
 above,  
 And the waves climb high and fast.  
 O, kiss me, kiss me, once again,  
 Lest thy kiss should be the last !  
 O kiss me ere we part ;  
 Grow closer to my heart !  
 My heart is warmer surely than the bosom  
 of the main.  
 O joy ! O bliss of blisses !  
 My heart of hearts art thou.  
 Come bathe me with thy kisses,  
 My eyelids and my brow.  
 Hark how the wild rain hisses,  
 And the loud sea roars below.  
 Thy heart beats through thy rosy limbs,  
 So gladly doth it stir ;  
 Thine eye in drops of gladness swims.  
 I have bathed thee with the pleasant  
 myrrh ;  
 Thy locks are dripping balm ;  
 Thou shalt not wander hence to-night,  
 I'll stay thee with my kisses.  
 To-night the roaring brine



Will rend thy golden tresses ;  
 The ocean with the morrow light  
 Will be both blue and calm ;  
 And the billow will embrace thee with a  
 kiss as soft as mine.  
 No Western odors wander  
 On the black and moaning sea,  
 And when thou art dead, Leander,  
 My soul must follow thee !  
 O go not yet, my love !  
 Thy voice is sweet and low ;  
 The deep salt wave breaks in above  
 Those marble steps below.  
 The turret-stairs are wet  
 That lead into the sea.  
 Leander ! go not yet.  
 The pleasant stars have set :  
 O, go not, go not yet,  
 Or I will follow thee !

## THE MYSTIC.

ANGELS have talked with him, and showed  
 him thrones :  
 Ye knew him not ; he was not one of ye,  
 Ye scorned him with an undiscerning  
 scorn :  
 Ye could not read the marvel in his eye,  
 The still serene abstraction : he hath felt  
 The vanities of after and before ;  
 Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart  
 The stern experiences of converse lives,  
 The linked woes of many a fiery change  
 Had purified, and chastened, and made  
 free.  
 Always there stood before him, night and  
 day,  
 Of wayward vary-colored circumstance  
 The imperishable presences serene,  
 Colossal, without form, or sense, or sound,  
 Dim shadows but unwaning presences  
 Fourfaced to four corners of the sky :  
 And yet again, three shadows, fronting  
 one,  
 One forward, one respectant, three but  
 one ;  
 And yet again, again and evermore,  
 For the two first were not, but only seemed,  
 One shadow in the midst of a great light,  
 One reflex from eternity on time,  
 One mighty countenance of perfect calm,  
 Awful with most invariable eyes.  
 For him the silent congregated hours,  
 Daughters of time, divinely tall, beneath  
 Severe and youthful brows, with shining  
 eyes

Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent light  
 Of earliest youth pierced through and  
 through with all  
 Keen knowledges of low-embowéd eld)  
 Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud  
 Which droops low-hung on either gate of  
 life,  
 Both birth and death : he in the centre  
 fixt,  
 Saw far on each side through the grated  
 gates  
 Most pale and clear and lovely distances.  
 He often lying broad awake, and yet  
 Remaining from the body, and apart  
 In intellect and power and will, hath heard  
 Time flowing in the middle of the night,  
 And all things creeping to a day of doom.  
 How could ye know him ? Ye were yet  
 within  
 The narrower circle : he had well nigh  
 reached  
 The last, which with a region of white  
 flame,  
 Pure without heat, into a larger air  
 Upburning, and an ether of black blue,  
 Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

## THE GRASSHOPPER.

## I.

VOICE of the summer wind,  
 Joy of the summer plain,  
 Life of the summer hours,  
 Carol clearly, bound along.  
 No Tithon thou as poets feign  
 (Shame fall 'em they are deaf and blind),  
 But an insect lithe and strong,  
 Bowing the seeded summer flowers.  
 Prove their falsehood and thy quarrel,  
 Vaulting on thine airy feet.  
 Clap thy shielded sides and carol,  
 Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.  
 Thou art a mailed warrior in youth and  
 strength complete ;  
 Armed cap-a-pie  
 Full fair to see ;  
 Unknowing fear,  
 Undreading loss,  
 A gallant cavalier,  
*Sans peur et sans reproche,*  
 In sunlight and in shadow,  
 The Bayard of the meadow.

## II.

I would dwell with thee,  
 Merry grasshopper,  
 Thou art so glad and free,

And as light as air ;  
 Thou hast no sorrow or tears,  
 Thou hast no compt of years,  
 No withered immortality,  
 But a short youth sunny and free.

Carol clearly, bound along,

Soon thy joy is over,  
 A summer of loud song,  
 And slumbers in the clover.

What hast thou to do with evil  
 In thine hour of love and revel,

In thy heat of summer pride,  
 Pushing the thick roots aside  
 Of the singing floweréd grasses,  
 That brush thee with their silken  
 tresses ?

What hast thou to do with evil,  
 Shooting, singing, ever springing  
 In and out the emerald glooms,  
 Ever leaping, ever singing,  
 Lighting on the golden blooms ?

### LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGETFUL- NESS.

ERE yet my heart was sweet Love's  
 tomb,  
 Love labored honey busily.  
 I was the hive, and Love the bee,  
 My heart the honeycomb.  
 One very dark and chilly night  
 Pride came beneath and held a light.

The cruel vapors went through all,  
 Sweet Love was withered in his cell :  
 Pride took Love's sweets, and by a spell  
 Did change them into gall ;  
 And Memory, though fed by Pride,  
 Did wax so thin on gall,  
 Awhile she scarcely lived at all.  
 What marvel that she died ?

### CHORUS

IN AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA, WRITTEN  
 VERY EARLY.

THE varied earth, the moving heaven,  
 The rapid waste of roving sea,  
 The fountain-pregnant mountains riven  
 To shapes of wildest anarchy,  
 By secret fire and midnight storms  
 That wander round their windy cones,  
 The subtle life, the countless forms  
 Of living things, the wondrous tones  
 Of man and beast are full of strange  
 Astonishment and boundless change.

The day, the diamonded night,  
 The echo, feeble child of sound,  
 The heavy thunder's griding might,  
 The herald lightning's starry bound,  
 The vocal spring of bursting bloom,  
 The naked summer's glowing birth,  
 The troublous autumn's sallow gloom,  
 The hoarhead winter paving earth  
 With sheeny white, are full of strange  
 Astonishment and boundless change.

Each sun which from the centre flings  
 Grand music and redundant fire,  
 The burning belts, the mighty rings,  
 The murmurous planets' rolling choir,  
 The globe-filled arch that, cleaving air,  
 Lost in its own effulgence sleeps,  
 The lawless comets as they glare,  
 And thunder through the sapphire deeps  
 In wayward strength, and full of  
 strange  
 Astonishment and boundless change.

### LOST HOPE.

YOU cast to ground the hope which once  
 was mine :  
 But did the while your harsh decree  
 deplore,  
 Embalming with sweet tears the vacant  
 shrine,  
 My heart, where Hope had been and  
 was no more.

So on an oaken sprout  
 A goodly acorn grew ;  
 But winds from heaven shook the  
 acorn out,  
 And filled the cup with dew.

### THE TEARS OF HEAVEN.

HEAVEN weeps above the earth all night  
 till morn,  
 In darkness weeps as all ashamed to weep,  
 Because the earth hath made her state  
 forlorn  
 With self-wrought evil of unnumbered  
 years,  
 And doth the fruit of her dishonor reap.  
 And all the day heaven gathers back  
 her tears  
 Into her own blue eyes so clear and deep,  
 And showering down the glory of light-  
 some day,  
 Smiles on the earth's worn brow to win  
 her if she may.

## LOVE AND SORROW.

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first green leaf  
 With which the fearful springtide flecks  
 the lea,  
 Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee  
 That thou hast half my heart, for bitter  
 grief  
 Doth hold the other half in sovrantry.  
 Thou art my heart's sun in love's crys-  
 talline :  
 Yet on both sides at once thou canst not  
 shine :  
 Thine is the bright side of my heart,  
 and thine  
 My heart's day, but the shadow of my  
 heart,  
 Issue of its own substance, my heart's night  
 Thou canst not lighten even with *thy* light,  
 All-powerful in beauty as thou art.  
 Almeida, if my heart were substanceless,  
 Then might thy rays pass through to  
 the other side,  
 So swiftly, that they nowhere would abide,  
 But lose themselves in utter emptiness.  
 Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit  
 sleep ;  
 They never learned to love who never  
 knew to weep.

## TO A LADY SLEEPING.

O THOU whose fringed lids I gaze upon,  
 Through whose dim brain the wingéd  
 dreams are borne,  
 Unroof the shrines of clearest vision,  
 In honor of the silver-fleckéd morn ;  
 Long hath the white wave of the virgin  
 light  
 Driven back the billow of the dreamful  
 dark.  
 Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,  
 Though long ago listening the poiséd lark,  
 With eyes dropt downward through the  
 blue serene,  
 Over heaven's parapet the angels lean.

## SONNET.

COULD I outwear my present state of woe  
 With one brief winter, and indue i' the  
 spring  
 Hues of fresh youth, and mightily outgrow  
 The wan dark coil of faded suffering —  
 Forth in the pride of beauty issuing  
 A sheeny snake, the light of vernal bowers,

Moving his crest to all sweet plots of  
 flowers  
 And watered valleys where the young  
 birds sing ;  
 Could I thus hope my lost delight's re-  
 newing,  
 I straightly would command the tears to  
 creep  
 From my charged lids ; but inwardly I  
 weep ,  
 Some vital heat as yet my heart is wooing :  
 That to itself hath drawn the frozen rain  
 From my cold eyes, and melted it again.

## SONNET.

THOUGH Night hath climbed her peak  
 of highest noon,  
 And bitter blasts the screaming autumn  
 whirl,  
 All night through archways of the bridgéd  
 pearl,  
 And portals of pure silver, walks the moon.  
 Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to agony,  
 Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to joy,  
 And dross to gold with glorious alchemy,  
 Basing thy throne above the world's an-  
 noy.  
 Reign thou above the storms of sorrow  
 and ruth  
 That roar beneath ; unshaken peace hath  
 won thee ;  
 So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms  
 of truth ;  
 So shall the blessing of the meek be on  
 thee ;  
 So in thine hour of dawn, the body's youth,  
 An honorable eld shall come upon thee.

## SONNET.

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of Good,  
 Or propagate again her loathéd kind,  
 Thronging the cells of the diseaséd mind,  
 Hateful with hanging cheeks, a withered  
 brood,  
 Though hourly pastured on the salient  
 blood ?  
 O that the wind which bloweth cold or  
 heat  
 Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen beat  
 Of their broad vans, and in the solitude  
 Of middle space confound them, and  
 blow back  
 Their wild cries down their cavern  
 throats, and slake

With points of blast-borne hail their  
 heated eyne !  
 So their wan limbs no more might come  
 between  
 The moon and the moon's reflex in the  
 night,  
 Nor blot with floating shades the solar  
 light.

## SONNET.

THE pallid thunder-stricken sigh for gain,  
 Down an ideal stream they ever float,  
 And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,  
 Drown soul and sense, while wistfully  
 they strain  
 Weak eyes upon the glistening sands  
 that robe  
 The understream. The wise, could he  
 behold

Cathedraled caverns of thick-ribbed gold  
 And branching silvers of the central globe,  
 Would marvel from so beautiful a sight  
 How scorn and ruin, pain and hate could  
 flow :

But Hatred in a gold cave sits below ;  
 Pleached with her hair, in mail of argent  
 light

Shot into gold, a snake her forehead clips,  
 And skins the color from her trembling  
 lips.

## LOVE.

## I.

THOU, from the first, unborn, undying  
 love,

Albeit we gaze not on thy glories near,  
 Before the face of God didst breathe and  
 move,

Though night and pain and ruin and  
 death reign here.

Thou foldest, like a golden atmosphere,  
 The very throne of the eternal God :  
 Passing through thee the edicts of his fear  
 Are mellowed into music, borne abroad  
 By the loud winds, though they uprend  
 the sea,

Even from its central deeps : thine empery  
 Is over all ; thou wilt not brook eclipse ;  
 Thou goest and returnest to His lips  
 Like lightning : thou dost ever brood above  
 The silence of all hearts, unutterable Love.

## II.

To know thee is all wisdom, and old age  
 Is but to know thee : dimly we behold thee

Athwart the veils of evils which infold  
 thee.

We beat upon our aching hearts in rage ;  
 We cry for thee ; we deem the world  
 thy tomb.

As dwellers in lone planets look upon  
 The mighty disk of their majestic sun,  
 Hollowed in awful chasms of wheeling  
 gloom,

Making their day dim, so we gaze on thee.  
 Come, thou of many crowns, white-robed  
 love,

Oh ! rend the veil in twain : all men  
 adore thee ;

Heaven crieth after thee ; earth waiteth  
 for thee ;

Breathe on thy wingéd throne, and it  
 shall move

In music and in light o'er land and sea.

## III.

And now — methinks I gaze upon thee  
 now,

As on a serpent in his agonies  
 Awe-stricken Indians ; what time laid low  
 And crushing the thick fragrant reeds  
 he lies,

When the new year warm-breathed on  
 the Earth,

Waiting to light him with her purple  
 skies,

Calls to him by the fountain to uprise.  
 Already with the pangs of a new birth  
 Strain the hot spheres of his convulsed  
 eyes,

And in his writhings awful hues begin  
 To wander down his sable-sheeny sides,  
 Like light on troubled waters : from  
 within

Anon he rusheth forth with merry din,  
 And in him light and joy and strength  
 abides ;

And from his brows a crown of living light  
 Looks through the thick-stemmed woods  
 by day and night.

## THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep ;  
 Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
 His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep,  
 The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sunlights  
 flee

About his shadowy sides : above him swell  
 Huge sponges of millennial growth and  
 height ;



And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret  
cell

Unnumbered and enormous polypi  
Winnow with giant fins the slumbering  
green.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
Battening upon huge seaworms in his  
sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the deep ;  
Then once by man and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the sur-  
face die.

### ENGLISH WAR-SONG.

WHO fears to die ? Who fears to die ?  
Is there any here who fears to die ?  
He shall find what he fears ; and none  
shall grieve  
For the man who fears to die ;  
But the withering scorn of the many  
shall cleave  
To the man who fears to die.

#### CHORUS.

Shout for England !  
Ho ! for England !  
George for England !  
Merry England !  
England for aye !

The hollow at heart shall crouch forlorn,  
He shall eat the bread of common  
scorn ;

It shall be steeped in the salt, salt tear,  
Shall be steeped in his own salt tear :  
Far better, far better he never were born  
Than to shame merry England here.

Cho. — Shout for England ! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy ;  
Hark ! he shouteth — the ancient ene-  
my !  
On the ridge of the hill his banners rise ;  
They stream like fire in the skies ;  
Hold up the Lion of England on high  
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

Cho. — Shout for England ! etc.

Come along ! we alone of the earth are  
free ;  
The child in our cradles is bolder than  
he ;  
For where is the heart and strength of  
slaves ?

Oh ! where is the strength of slaves ?  
He is weak ! we are strong : he a slave,  
we are free ;

Come along ! we will dig their graves.

Cho. — Shout for England ! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy ;  
Will he dare to battle with the free ?  
Spur along ! spur amain ! charge to the  
fight :

Charge ! charge to the fight !  
Hold up the Lion of England on high !  
Shout for God and our right !

Cho. — Shout for England ! etc.

### NATIONAL SONG.

THERE is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no hearts like English hearts,  
Such hearts of oak as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no men like Englishmen,  
So tall and bold as they be.

#### CHORUS.

For the French the Pope may shrive 'em,  
For the devil a whit we heed 'em :  
As for the French, God speed 'em  
Unto their heart's desire,  
And the merry devil drive 'em  
Through the water and the fire.

#### FULL CHORUS.

Our glory is our freedom,  
We lord it o'er the sea ;  
We are the sons of freedom,  
We are free.

There is no land like England,  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no wives like English wives,  
So fair and chaste as they be.  
There is no land like England,  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no maids like English maids,  
So beautiful as they be.

Cho. — For the French, etc.

### DUALISMS.

Two bees within a crystal flowerbell  
rockéd,  
Hum a lovelay to the west-wind at  
noontide.

Both alike, they buzz together,  
Both alike, they hum together,  
Through and through the flowered  
heather.

Where in a creeping cove the wave un-  
shockéd

Lays itself calm and wide.

Over a stream two birds of glancing  
feather

Do wooeach other, carolling together.

Both alike, they glide together,

Side by side ;

Both alike, they sing together,  
Arching blue-glosséd necks beneath the  
purple weather.

Two children lovelier than Love adown  
the lea are singing,

As they gambol, lily-garlands ever string-  
ing :

Both in blsomwhite silk are  
frockéd :

Like, unlike, they roam together  
Under a summer vault of golden  
weather :

Like, unlike, they sing together

Side by side,

MidMay's darling golden lock-  
éd,

Summer'stanlingdiamondeyed.

### WE ARE FREE.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,

Leaning upon the wingé' sea,

Breathed low around the rolling earth

With mellow preludes, "We are free."

The streams through many a lilied row

Down-carolling to the crispéd sea,

Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow

Atween the blossoms, "We are free."

### THE SEA FAIRIES.\*

SLOW sailed the weary mariners, and  
saw

Between the green brink and the run-  
ning foam

White limbs anrobéd in a crystal air,

Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms  
prest

To little harps of gold : and while they  
mused,

Whispering to each other half in fear,  
Shrill music reached them on the mid-  
dle sea.

\* Original form.

### SONG.

Whither away, whither away, whither  
away ? Fly no more :

Whither away wi' the singing sail ?  
whither away wi' the oar ?

Whither away from the high green field  
and the happy blossomingshore ?

Weary mariners, hither away,

One and all, one and all,

Weary mariners, come and play ;

We will sing to you all the day ;

Furl the sail and the foam will fall

From the prow ! One and all

Furl the sail ! Drop the oar !

Leap ashore,

Know danger and trouble and toil no  
more,

Whither away wi' the sail and the oar ?

Drop the oar,

Leap ashore,

Fly no more !

Whither away wi' the sail ? whither away  
wi' the oar ?

Day and night to the billow the foun-  
tain calls :

Down shower the gambolling water-  
falls

From wandering over the lea ;  
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-  
hill swells

High over the full-toned sea.

Merrily carol the revelling gales

Over the islands free :

From the green seabanks the rose  
down trails

To the happy brimméd sea.

Come hither, come hither and be our  
lords,

For merry brides are we :

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
sweet words.

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glis-  
ten

With pleasure and love and revelry ;

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glis-  
ten,

When the sharp clear twang of the gold-  
en chords

Runs up the ridgéd sea.

Ye will not find so happy a shore,

Weary mariners ! all the world o'er ;

O, fly no more !

Hearken ye, hearken ye, sorrow shall  
darken ye,

Danger and trouble and toil no more ;

Whither away ?  
Drop the oar ;  
Hither away  
Leap ashore ;

O fly no more — no more :  
Whither away, whither away, whither  
away with the sail and the oar ?

### *Οἱ ῥέοντες.*

#### I.

ALL thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are  
true,  
All visions wild and strange ;  
Man is the measure of all truth  
Unto himself. All truth is change,

All men do walk in sleep, and all  
Have faith in that they dream :  
For all things are as they seem to all,  
And all things flow like a stream.

#### II.

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,  
Nor good nor ill, nor light nor shade,  
Nor essence nor eternal laws :  
For nothing is, but all is made.  
But if I dream that all these are,  
They are to me for that I dream ;  
For all things are as they seem to all,  
And all things flow like a stream.

Argal — this very opinion is only true  
relatively to the flowing philosophers.

## POEMS PUBLISHED IN THE EDITION OF 1833, AND OMITTED IN LATER EDITIONS.

### SONNET.

MINE be the strength of spirit fierce and  
free,  
Likesome broad river rushing down alone,  
With the selfsame impulse wherewith  
he was thrown  
From his loud fount upon the echoing  
lea : —  
Which with increasing might doth for-  
ward flee  
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape,  
and isle,  
And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a  
mile.  
Mine be the Power which ever to its sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;  
Even as the great gulfstream of Florida  
Floats far away into the Northern seas  
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

TO ———.

#### I.

ALL good things have not kept aloof,  
Nor wandered into other ways ;  
I have not lacked thy mild reproof,  
Nor golden largess of thy praise,  
But life is full of weary days.

#### II.

Shake hands, my friend, across the brink  
Of that deep grave to which I go.  
Shake hands once more : I cannot sink  
So far — far down, but I shall know  
Thy voice, and answer from below.

#### III.

When, in the darkness over me,  
The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,  
Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,  
But pledge me in the flowing grape.

#### IV.

And when the sappy field and wood  
Grow green beneath the showery gray,  
And rugged barks begin to bud,  
And through damp holts, new flushed  
with May,  
Ring sudden laughter of the Jay ;

#### V.

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
And on my clay the darnels grow.  
Come only when the days are still,  
And at my headstone whisper low,  
And tell me if the woodbines blow,

#### VI.

If thou art blest, my mother's smile  
Undimmed, if bees are on the wing :

Then cease, my friend, a little while,  
That I may hear the throstle sing  
His bridal song, the boast of spring.

## VII.

Sweet as the noise in parchéd plains  
Of bubbling wells that fret the stones  
(If any sense in me remains),  
Thy words will be ; thy cheerful tones  
As welcome to my crumbling bones.

## BONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts  
of oak,  
Madman ! — to chain with chains, and  
bind with bands  
That island queen that sways the floods  
and lands  
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight  
woke,  
When from her wooden walls, lit by sure  
hands,  
With thunders, and with lightnings, and  
with smoke,  
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when  
Elsinore  
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,  
Rocking with shattered spars, with sud-  
den fires  
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once more  
We taught him : late he learned humility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon schooled  
with briers.

## SONNETS.

## I.

O BEAUTY, passing beauty ! sweetest  
Sweet !  
How canst thou let me waste my youth  
in sighs ?  
I only ask to sit beside thy feet.  
Thou knowest I dare not look into  
thine eyes.  
Might I but kiss thy hand ! I dare not  
fold  
My arms about thee — scarcely dare to  
speak.  
And nothing seems to me so wild and bold,  
As with one kiss to touch thy blessed  
cheek.

Methinks if I should kiss thee, no control  
Within the thrilling brain could keep  
afloat

The subtle spirit. Even while I spoke,  
The bare word KISS hath made my inner  
soul

To tremble like a lutestring, ere the  
note

Hath melted in the silence that it broke.

## II.

But were I loved, as I desire to be,  
What is there in the great sphere of the  
earth,

And range of evil between death and birth,  
That I should fear, — if I were loved by  
thee ?

All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if  
thou wert mine,

As I have heard that, somewhere in the  
main,

Fresh-water springs come up through  
bitter brine.

'T were joy, not fear, clasped hand-in-  
hand with thee,

To wait for death — mute — careless of  
all ills,

Apart upon a mountain, though the surge  
Of some new deluge from a thousand  
hills

Flung leagues of roaring foam into the  
gorge

Below us, as far on as eye could see.

## THE HESPERIDES.

"Hesperus and his daughters three,  
That sing about the golden tree."

*Comus.*

THE North-wind fall'n, in the new-starréd  
night

Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond

The hoary promontory of Solœ

Past Thymiatæria, in calméd bays,

Between the southern and the western  
Horn,

Heard neither warbling of the nightingale,

Nor melody of the Libyan lotus flute

Blown seaward from the shore ; but from  
a slope

That ran bloom-bright into the Atlantic  
blue,

Beneath a highland leaning down a weight

Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedar shade,

Came voices, like the voices in a dream,

Continuous, till he reached the outer sea.



## SONG.

## I.

The golden apple, the golden apple, the  
 hallowed fruit,  
 Guard it well, guard it warily,  
 Singing airily,  
 Standing about the charmed root.  
 Round about all is mute,  
 As the snow-field on the mountain-peaks,  
 As the sand-field at the mountain-foot.  
 Crocodiles in briny creeks  
 Sleep and stir not : all is mute.  
 If ye sing not, if ye make false measure,  
 We shall lose eternal pleasure,  
 Worth eternal want of rest.  
 Laugh not loudly : watch the treasure  
 Of the wisdom of the West.  
 In a corner wisdom whispers. Five and  
 three  
 (Let it not be preached abroad) make an  
 awful mystery.  
 For the blossom unto threefold music  
 bloweth ;  
 Evermore it is born anew ;  
 And the sap to threefold music floweth,  
 From the root  
 Drawn in the dark,  
 Up to the fruit,  
 Creeping under the fragrant bark,  
 Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and thro'.  
 Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,  
 Looking warily  
 Every way,  
 Guard the apple night and day,  
 Lest one from the East come and take it  
 away.

## II.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,  
 watch, ever and aye,  
 Looking under silver hair with a silver  
 eye.  
 Father, twinkle not thy steadfast sight ;  
 Kingdoms lapse, and climates change,  
 and races die ;  
 Honor comes with mystery ;  
 Hoarded wisdom brings delight.  
 Number, tell them over and number  
 How many the mystic fruit-tree holds  
 Lest the red-combed dragon slumber  
 Rolled together in purple folds.  
 Look to him, father, lest he wink, and  
 the golden apple be stol'n away,  
 For his ancient heart is drunk with over-  
 watchings night and day,

Round about the hallowed fruit-tree  
 curled —

Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the  
 wind, without stop,  
 Lest his scaled eyelid drop,  
 For he is older than the world.  
 If he waken, we waken,  
 Rapidly levelling eager eyes.  
 If he sleep, we sleep,  
 Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.  
 If the golden apple be taken,  
 The world will be overwise.  
 Five links, a golden chain, are we,  
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,  
 Bound about the golden tree.

## III.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,  
 watch, night and day,  
 Lest the old wound of the world be healed,  
 The glory unsealed,  
 The golden apple stolén away,  
 And the ancient secret revealed.  
 Look from west to east along :  
 Father, old Himala weakens, Caucasus  
 is bold and strong.  
 Wandering waters unto wandering waters  
 call ;  
 Let them clash together, foam and fall.  
 Out of watchings, out of wiles,  
 Comes the bliss of secret smiles.  
 All things are not told to all.  
 Half-round the mantling night is drawn,  
 Purple fringed with even and dawn,  
 Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hateth  
 morn.

## IV.

Every flower and every fruit the redolent  
 breath  
 Of this warm sea-wind ripeneth,  
 Arching the billow in his sleep ;  
 But the land-wind wandereth,  
 Broken by the highland-steep,  
 Two streams upon the violet deep ;  
 For the western sun and the western star,  
 And the low west-wind, breathing afar,  
 The end of day and beginning of night  
 Make the apple holy and bright ;  
 Holy and bright, round and full, bright  
 and blest,  
 Mellowed in a land of rest ;  
 Watch it warily day and night ;  
 All good things are in the west.  
 Till mid noon the cool east light  
 Is shut out by the tall hillbrow ;

But when the full-faced sunset yellowly  
 Stays on the flowering arch of the bough,  
 The luscious fruitage clustereth mellowly,  
 Golden-kernelled, golden-cored,  
 Sunset-ripened above on the tree.  
 The world is wasted with fire and sword,  
 But the apple of gold hangs over the sea.  
 Five links, a golden chain are we,  
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,  
 Daughters three,  
 Bound about  
 The guarléd bole of the charméed tree.  
 The golden apple, the golden apple, the  
     hallowed fruit,  
 Guard it well, guard it warily,  
 Watch it warily,  
 Singing airily,  
 Standing about the charméed root.

## ROSALIND.

## I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,  
 Whose free delight, from any height of  
     rapid flight,  
 Stoops at all game that wing the skies,  
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, with-  
     er,  
 Careless both of wind and weather,  
 Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
 Up or down the streaming wind?

## II.

The quick lark's closest-carolled strains,  
 The shadow rushing up the sea,  
 The lightning flash atween the rains,  
 The sunlight driving down the lea,  
 The leaping stream, the very wind,  
 That will not stay, upon his way,  
 To stoop the cowslip to the plains,  
 Is not so clear and bold and free  
 As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
 You care not for another's pains,  
 Because you are the soul of joy,  
 Bright metal all without alloy.  
 Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,  
 And flashes off a thousand ways  
 Through lips and eyes in subtle rays.  
 Your hawkeyes are keen and bright,  
 Keen with triumph, watching still  
 To pierce me through with pointed light ;  
 But oftentimes they flash and glitter  
 Like sunshine on a dancing rill,

And your words are seeming-bitter,  
 Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
 From excess of swift delight.

## III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
 My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :  
 Too long you keep the upper skies ;  
 Too long you roam and wheel at will ;  
 But we must hood your random eyes,  
 That care not whom they kill,  
 And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
 Is so sparkling-fresh to view,  
 Some red heath-flower in the dew,  
 Touched with sunrise. We must bind  
 And keep you fast, my Rosalind,  
 Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
 And clip your wings, and make you love :  
 When we have lured you from above,  
 And that delight of frolic flight, by day  
     or night,  
 From north to south ;  
 Will bind you fast in silken cords,  
 And kiss away the bitter words  
 From off your rosy mouth.\*

## SONG.

WHO can say  
 Why To-day  
 To-morrow will be yesterday ?  
 Who can tell

\* AUTHOR'S NOTE. — Perhaps the following lines may be allowed to stand as a separate poem ; originally they made part of the text, where they were manifestly superfluous.

MY Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,  
 Is one of those who know no strife  
 Of inward woe or outward fear ;  
 To whom the slope and stream of Life,  
 The life before, the life behind,  
 In the ear, from far and near,  
 Chimeth musically clear.  
 My falcon-hearted Rosalind,  
 Full-sailed before a vigorous wind,  
 Is one of those who cannot weep  
 For others' woes, but overleap  
 All the petty shocks and fears  
 That trouble life in early years,  
 With a flash of frolic scorn  
 And keen delight, that never falls  
 Away from freshness, self-upborne  
 With such gladness as, whenever  
 The fresh-flushing springtime calls  
 To the flooding waters cool,  
 Young fishes, on an April morn,  
 Up and down a rapid river,  
 Leap the little waterfalls  
 That sing into the pebbled pool,  
 My happy falcon, Rosalind,  
 Hath daring fancies of her own,  
 Fresh as the dawn before the day.  
 Fresh as the early sea-smell blown  
 Through vineyards from an inland bay.  
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 Because no shadow on you falls,  
 Think you hearts are tennisballs  
 To play with, wanton Rosalind !

Why to smell  
The violet recalls the dewy prime  
Of youth and buried time?  
The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

## KATE.

I KNOW her by her angry air,  
Her bright black eyes, her bright black  
hair,

Her rapid laughters wild and shrill,  
As laughters of the woodpecker  
From the bosom of a hill.

'T is Kate — she sayeth what she will :  
For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,  
Clear as the twanging of a harp.

Her heart is like a throbbing star.  
Kate hath a spirit ever strung  
Like a new bow, and bright and sharp,  
As edges of the scymitar.

Whence shall she take a fitting mate ?  
For Kate no common love will feel ;  
My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,  
As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith " the world is void of might."  
Kate saith " the men are gilded flies."

Kate snaps her fingers at my vows ;  
Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.

I would I were an arméd knight,  
Far famed for well-won enterprise,  
And wearing on my swarthy brows

The garland of new-wreathed emprise :  
For in a moment I would pierce

The blackest files of clanging fight,  
And strongly strike to left and right,  
In dreaming of my lady's eyes.

Oh ! Kate loves well the bold and  
fierce ;

But none are bold enough for Kate,  
She cannot find a fitting mate.

## SONNET

WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUT-  
BREAK OF THE POLISH INSURREC-  
TION.

BLOW ye the trumpet, gather from afar  
The hosts to battle : be not bought and  
sold.

Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold ;  
Break through your iron shackles — fling  
them far.

O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar

Grew to his strength among his deserts  
cold ;

When even to Moscow's cupolas were  
rolled

The growing murmurs of the Polish war !  
Now must your noble anger blaze out  
more

Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,  
The Moslem myriads fell, and fled before—  
Than when Zamoysky smote the Tartar  
Khan ;

Than earlier, when on the Baltic shore  
Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

## SONNET

ON THE RESULT OF THE LATE RUSSIAN  
INVASION OF POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden  
down,

And trampled under by the last and least  
Of men ? The heart of Poland hath not  
ceased

To quiver, though her sacred blood doth  
drown

The fields ; and out of every mouldering  
town

Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-  
creased,

Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
Transgress his ample bound to some  
new crown : —

Cries to Thee, " Lord, how long shall  
these things be ?

How long shall the icy-hearted Muscovite  
Oppress the region ? " Us, O Just and  
Good,

Forgive, who smiled when she was torn  
in three ;

Us, who stand *now*, when we should aid  
the right —

A matter to be wept with tears of blood !

## SONNET.

As when with downcast eyes we muse and  
brood,

And ebb into a former life, or seem  
To lapse far back in a confused dream

To states of mystical similitude ;  
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his  
chair,

Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,  
So that we say, " All this hath been before,

All this *hath* been, I know not when or where."  
 So, friend, when first I looked upon your face,  
 Our thought gave answer, each to each,  
     so true,  
 Opposed mirrors each reflecting each —  
 Altho' I knew not in what time or place,  
 Methought that I had often met with you,  
 And each had lived in the other's mind  
     and speech.

## O DARLING ROOM.

## I.

O DARLING room, my heart's delight  
 Dear room, the apple of my sight,  
 With thy two couches soft and white,  
 There is no room so exquisite,  
 No little room so warm and bright,  
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

## II.

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,  
 And Oberwinter's vineyards green,

Musical Lurlei ; and between  
 The hills to Bingen have I been,  
 Bingen in Darmstadt, where the Rhene  
 Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

## III.

Yet never did there meet my sight,  
 In any town to left or right,  
 A little room so exquisite,  
 With two such couches soft and white ;  
 Not any room so warm and bright,  
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

## TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

You did late review my lays,  
     Crusty Christopher ;  
 You did mingle blame and praise,  
     Rusty Christopher.  
 When I learnt from whom it came,  
 I forgave you all the blame,  
     Musty Christopher ;  
 I could *not* forgive the praise,  
     Fusty Christopher.

## FUGITIVE POEMS.

## NO MORE.\*

O SAD *No More!* O sweet *No More!*

O strange *No More!*

By a mossed brookbank on a stone  
 I smelt a wildweed flower alone ;  
 There was a ringing in my ears,  
 And both my eyes gushed out with  
     tears.

Surely all pleasant things had gone before,  
 Low-buried fathom deep beneath with  
     thee, NO MORE !

## ANACREONTICS.\*

WITH roses musky-breathed,  
 And drooping daffodilly,  
 And silver-leaved lily,  
 And ivy darkly-wreathed,  
 I wove a crown before her,  
 For her I love so dearly,

A garland for Lenora.  
 With a silken cord I bound it.  
 Lenora, laughing clearly  
 A light and thrilling laughter,  
 About her forehead wound it,  
 And loved me ever after.

## A FRAGMENT.\*

WHERE is the Giant of the Sun, which  
     stood  
 In the midnight the glory of old Rhodes,  
 A perfect Idol with profulgent brows  
 Far-sheening down the purple seas to  
     those  
 Who sailed from Mizraim underneath  
     the star  
 Named of the Dragon — and between  
     whose limbs  
 Of brassy vastness broad-blown Argosies  
 Drave into haven? Yet endure unscathed  
 Of changeful cycles the great Pyramids

\* From the Gem, a literary annual, for 1831.

\* From the Gem, a literary annual, for 1861.



Broad-based amid the fleeting sands, and  
sloped  
Into the slumberous summer noon ; but  
where,

Mysterious Egypt, are thine obelisks  
Graven with gorgeous emblems undis-  
cerned ?

Thy placid Sphinxes brooding o'er the  
Nile ?

Thy shadowing Idols in the solitudes,  
Awful Memnonian countenances calm  
Looking athwart the burning flats, far off  
Seen by the high-necked camel on the verge  
Journeying southward ? Where are thy  
monuments

Piled by the strong and sunborn Anakim  
Over their crowned brethren ON and OPH ?  
Thy Memnon when his peaceful lips are  
kist

With earliest rays, that from his mother's  
eyes

Flow over the Arabian bay, no more  
Breathes low into the charmed ears of  
morn

Clear melody flattering the crisped Nile  
By columned Thebes. Old Memphis hath  
gone down :

The Pharaohs are no more : somewhere  
in death

They sleep with staring eyes and gilded  
lips,

Wrapped round with spiced cerements  
in old grots

Rock-hewn and sealed for ever.

#### SONNET.\*

ME my own fate to lasting sorrow  
doometh :

Thy woes are birds of passage, transi-  
tory :

Thy spirit, circled with a living glory,  
In summer still a summer joy resumeth.  
Alone my hopeless melancholy gloometh,

Like a lone cypress, through the twi-  
light hoary,

From an old garden where no flower  
bloometh,

One cypress on an island promontory.

But yet my lonely spirit follows thine,  
As round the rolling earth night follows  
day :

But yet thy lights on my horizon shine  
Into my night, when thou art far away.

I am so dark, alas ! and thou so bright,  
When we two meet there's never perfect  
light.

#### SONNET.\*

CHECK every outflash, every ruder sally  
Of thought and speech ; speak low  
and give up wholly

Thy spirit to mild-minded melancholy ;  
This is the place. Through yonder pop-  
lar valley

Below the blue-green river windeth  
slowly ;

But in the middle of the sombre valley  
The crisped waters whisper musically,  
And all the haunted place is dark and  
holy.

The nightingale, with long and low pre-  
amble,

Warbled from yonder knoll of solemn  
larches,

And in and out the woodbine's flowery  
arches

The summer midges wove their wanton  
gambol,

And all the white-stemmed pinewood  
slept above —

When in this valley first I told my love.

#### THE SKIPPING-ROPE.†

SURE never yet was Antelope

Could skip so lightly by.

Stand off, or else my skipping-rope

Will hit you in the eye.

How lightly whirls the skipping-rope !

How fairy-like you fly !

Go, get you gone, you muse and mope —

I hate that silly sigh.

Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,

Or tell me how to die.

There, take it, take my skipping-rope,

And hang yourself thereby.

#### THE NEW TIMON AND THE POETS.‡

WE know him, out of Shakespeare's art,

And those fine curses which he spoke ;

The old Timon, with his noble heart,

That, strongly loathing, greatly broke.

\* Friendship's Offering, 1833.

† Omitted from the edition of 1842.

‡ Published in Punch, Feb. 1846, signed " Alcibiades."

So died the Old : here comes the New.  
 Regard him : a familiar face :  
 I thought we knew him : What, it's you,  
 The padded man — that wears the  
 stays —

Who killed the girls and thrilled the boys  
 With dandy pathos when you wrote !  
 A Lion, you, that made a noise,  
 And shook a mane *en papillotes*.

And once you tried the Muses too ;  
 You failed, Sir : therefore now you turn,  
 To fall on those who are to you  
 As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long-enduring hopes,  
 And careless what this hour may bring,  
 Can pardon little would-be POPES  
 And BRUMMELS, when they try to sting.

An Artist, Sir, should rest in Art,  
 And waive a little of his claim ;  
 To have the deep Poetic heart  
 Is more than all poetic fame.

But you, Sir, you are hard to please ;  
 You never look but half content ;  
 Nor like a gentleman at ease,  
 With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with fears,  
 You cannot let a body be :  
 It's always ringing in your ears,  
 "They call this man as good as *me*."

What profits now to understand  
 The merits of a spotless shirt —  
 A dapper boot — a little hand —  
 If half the little soul is dirt ?

You talk of tinsel ! why, we see  
 The old mark of rouse upon your cheeks.  
 You prate of Nature ! you are he  
 That spilt his life about the cliques.

A TIMON you ! Nay, nay, for shame :  
 It looks too arrogant a jest —  
 The fierce old man — to take his name,  
 You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

## STANZAS.\*

WHAT time I wasted youthful hours,  
 One of the shining wingéd powers,  
 Show'd me vast cliffs with crown of towers.

\* The Keepsake. 1851.

As towards the gracious light I bow'd,  
 They seem'd high palaces and proud,  
 Hid now and then with sliding cloud.

He said, "The labor is not small ;  
 Yet winds the pathway free to all :—  
 Take care thou dost not fear to fall !"

## SONNET

TO WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY.\*

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night we  
 part.

Full-handed thunders often have con-  
 fest

Thy power, well-used to move the pub-  
 lic breast.

We thank thee with one voice, and from  
 the heart.

Farewell, Macready ; since this night  
 we part.

Go, take thine honors home : rank  
 with the best,

Garrick, and statelier Kemble, and the  
 rest

Who made a nation purer thro' their art.  
 Thine is it, that our Drama did not die,

Nor flicker down to brainless panto-  
 mime,

And those gilt gauds men-children  
 swarm to see.

Farewell, Macready ; moral, grave, sub-  
 lime.

Our Shakspeare's bland and universal eye  
 Dwells pleased, thro' twice a hundred  
 years, on thee.

## BRITONS, GUARD YOUR OWN.†

RISE, Britons, rise, if manhood be not  
 dead ;

The world's last tempest darkens over-  
 head ;

The Pope has bless'd him ;

The Church caress'd him ;

He triumphs ; may be we shall stand alone.

Britons, guard your own.

His ruthless host is bought with plunder'd  
 gold,

By lying priests the peasants' votes con-  
 troll'd.

\* Read by Mr. John Forster at a dinner given to Mr. Macready, March 1, 1851, on his retirement from the stage.

† The Examiner, 1852.

All freedom vanish'd,  
The true men banish'd,  
He triumphs ; maybe we shall stand alone.  
Britons, guard your own.

Peace-lovers we — sweet Peace we all  
desire —

Peace-lovers we — but who can trust a  
liar ? —

Peace-lovers, haters  
Of shameless traitors,  
We hate not France, but this man's heart  
of stone,  
Britons, guard your own.

We hate not France, but France has lost  
her voice.

This man is France, the man they call  
her choice.

By tricks and spying,  
By craft and lying,  
And murder was her freedom overthrown.  
Britons, guard your own.

“Vive l'Empereur” may follow by and  
by ;

“God save the Queen” is here a truer cry.  
God save the Nation,  
The toleration,

And the free speech that makes a Briton  
known.  
Britons, guard your own.

Rome's dearest daughter now is captive  
France,

The Jesuit laughs, and reckoning on his  
chance,

Would unrelenting,  
Kill all dissenting,  
Till we were left to fight for truth alone.  
Britons, guard your own.

Call home your ships across Biscayan  
tides,

To blow the battle from their oaken sides.  
Why waste they yonder  
Their idle thunder ?

Why stay they there to guard a foreign  
throne ?

Seamen, guard your own.

We were the best of marksmen long ago,  
We won old battles with our strength,  
the bow.

Now practice, yeomen,  
Like those bowmen,  
Till your balls fly as their shafts have  
flown.

Yeomen, guard your own.

His soldier-ridden Highness might in-  
cline

To take Sardinia, Belgium, or the Rhine :  
Shall we stand idle,  
Nor seek to bridle

His rude aggressions, till we stand alone ?  
Make their cause your own.

Should he land here, and for one hour  
prevail,

There must no man go back to bear the  
tale :

No man to bear it —  
Swear it ! we swear it !

Although we fight the banded world  
alone,

We swear to guard our own.

### THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852.\*

My lords, we heard you speak ; you told  
us all

That England's honest censure went  
too far ;

That our free press should cease to brawl,  
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into  
war.

It was an ancient privilege, my lords,  
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing, in-  
to words.

We love not this French God, this child  
of Hell,

Wild War, who breaks the converse of  
the wise ;

But though we love kind Peace so well,  
We dare not, e'en by silence, sanction  
lies.

It might safe be our censures to withdraw ;  
And yet, my lords, not well ; there is a  
higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak free,  
Though all the storm of Europe on us  
break ;

No little German state are we,  
But the one voice in Europe ; we *must*  
speak ;

That if to-night our greatness were  
struck dead,

There might remain some record of the  
things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.  
Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er.

\* The Examiner, 1852, and signed “Merlin.”

Better the waste Atlantic roll'd

On her and us and ours for evermore.  
What ! have we fought for freedom from  
our prime,  
At last to dodge and palter with a public crime ?

Shall we fear him ? our own we never feared.

From our first Charles by force we wrung our claims,  
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
And flung the burden of the second James.

I say we never fear'd ! and as for these,  
We broke them on the land, we drove them on the seas.

And you, my lords, you make the people muse,

In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed—  
Were those your sires who fought at Lewes ?

Is this the manly strain of Runnymede ?  
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,  
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this monstrous fraud.

*We* feel, at least, that silence here were sin.

Not ours the fault if we have feeble hosts—

If easy patrons of their kin

Have left the last free race with naked coasts !

They knew the precious things they had to guard :

For us, we will not spare the tyrant one hard word.

Though niggard throats of Manchester may bawl,

What England was, shall her true sons forget ?

We are not cotton-spinners all,  
But some love England, and her honor yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ shall stand,  
And hold against the world the honor of the land.

#### HANDS ALL ROUND. \*

FIRST drink a health, this solemn night,  
A health to England, every guest ;

That man 's the best cosmopolite  
Who loves his native country best.

May freedom's oak for ever live  
With stronger life from day to day ;  
That man 's the best Conservative  
Who lops the mouldered branch away.  
Hands all round !

God the tyrant's hope confound !  
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,  
And the great name of England, round and round.

A health to Europe's honest men !  
Heaven guard them from her tyrants' jails !

From wronged Poerio's noisome den,  
From iron limbs and tortured nails !  
We curse the crimes of southern kings,  
The Russian whips and Austrian rods—  
We likewise have our evil things ;  
Too much we make our Ledgers, Gods.  
Yet hands all round !

God the tyrant's cause confound !  
To Europe's better health we drink, my friends,  
And the great name of England, round and round !

What health to France, if France be she,  
Whom martial progress only charms ?  
Yet tell her—better to be free  
Than vanquish all the world in arms.  
Her frantic city's flashing heats  
But fire, to blast, the hopes of men.  
Why change the titles of your streets ?  
You fools, you 'll want them all again.  
Hands all round !

God the tyrant's cause confound !  
To France, the wiser France, we drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England, round and round.

Gigantic daughter of the West,  
We drink to thee across the flood,  
We know thee and we love thee best,  
For art thou not of British blood ?  
Should war's mad blast again be blown,  
Permit not thou the tyrant powers  
To fight thy mother here alone,  
But let thy broadsides roar with ours.  
Hands all round !

God the tyrant's cause confound !  
To our dear kinsmen of the West, my friends,  
And the great name of England, round and round.



O rise, our strong Atlantic sons,  
 When war against our freedom springs !  
 O speak to Europe through your guns !  
 They *can* be understood by kings.  
 You must not mix our Queen with those  
 That wish to keep their people fools ;  
 Our freedom's foemen are her foes,  
 She comprehends the race she rules.  
     Hands all round !  
 God the tyrant's cause confound !  
 To our dear kinsman in the West, my  
     friends,  
 And the great name of England, round  
     and round.

## THE WAR. \*

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,  
 Storm in the South that darkens the  
     day,  
 Storm of battle and thunder of war,  
 Well, if it do not roll our way.  
     Form ! form ! Riflemen form !  
     Ready, be ready to meet the storm !  
     Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form !  
 Be not deaf to the sound that warns !  
 Be not gull'd by a despot's plea !  
 Are figs of thistles, or grapes of thorns ?  
 How should a despot set men free ?  
     Form ! form ! Riflemen form !  
     Ready, be ready to meet the storm !  
     Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form !

Let your Reforms for a moment go,  
 Look to your butts and take good aims.  
 Better a rotten borough or so,  
 Than a rotten fleet or a city in flames !  
     Form ! form ! Riflemen form !  
     Ready, be ready to meet the storm !  
     Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form !

Form, be ready to do or die !  
 Form in Freedom's name and the  
     Queen's !  
 True, that we have a faithful ally,  
 But only the Devil knows what he  
     means.  
     Form ! form ! Riflemen form !  
     Ready, be ready to meet the storm !  
     Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form !

T.

## ON A SPITEFUL LETTER.\*

HERE, it is here—the close of the year,  
 And with it a spiteful letter.  
 My fame in song has done him much  
     wrong,  
 For himself has done much better.

O foolish bard, is your lot so hard,  
 If men neglect your pages ?  
 I think not much of yours or of mine :  
     I hear the roll of the ages.

This fallen leaf, is n't fame as brief ?  
 My rhymes may have been the stronger.  
 Yet hate me not, but abide your lot ;  
     I last but a moment longer.

O faded leaf, is n't fame as brief ?  
 What room is here for a hater ?  
 Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener leaf,  
 For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I—is n't that your cry ?  
 And I shall live to see it.  
 Well, if it be so, so it is, you know ;  
 And if it be so—so be it !

O summer leaf, is n't life as brief ?  
 But this is the time of hollies.  
 And my heart, my heart is an evergreen :  
 I hate the spites and the follies.

1865–1866.†

I STOOD on a tower in the wet,  
 And New Year and Old Year met,  
 And winds were roaring and blowing ;  
 And I said, “O years that meet in  
     tears,  
 Have ye aught that is worth the know-  
     ing ?  
 Science enough and exploring,  
 Wanderers coming and going,  
 Matter enough for deploring,  
 But aught that is worth the knowing ?”  
 Seas at my feet were flowing,  
 Waves on the shingle pouring,  
 Old Year roaring and blowing,  
 And New Year blowing and roaring.

\* Once a Week, January 4, 1868.

† Good Words, March, 1868.

\* London Times, May 9, 1859.

# THE WINDOW

## OR, THE SONGS OF THE WRENS.

WORDS WRITTEN FOR MUSIC.

THE MUSIC BY ARTHUR SULLIVAN.

FOUR years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as "Orpheus with his lute," and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days ; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

A. TENNYSON.

*December, 1870.*

### I.

#### ON THE HILL.

THE lights and shadows fly !  
Yonder it brightens and darkens down  
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye !  
O is it the brook, or a pool, or her win-  
dow-pane,

When the winds are up in the morn-  
ing ?

Clouds that are racing above,  
And winds and lights and shadows that  
cannot be still,

All running on one way to the home  
of my love,

You are all running on, and I stand on  
the slope of the hill,  
And the winds are up in the morning !

Follow, follow the chase !

And my thoughts are as quick and as  
quick, ever on, on, on.

O lights, are you flying over her sweet  
little face ?

And my heart is there before you are  
come and gone,

When the winds are up in the morn-  
ing !

Follow them down the slope !

And I follow them down to the window-  
pane of my dear,

And it brightens and darkens and  
brightens like my hope,  
And it darkens and brightens and dark-  
ens like my fear,  
And the winds are up in the morn-  
ing.

### II.

#### AT THE WINDOW.

VINE, vine and eglantine,  
Clasp her window, trail and twine !  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,  
Kiss, kiss ; and make her a bower  
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,  
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine ?  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,  
Kiss, kiss — And out of her bower  
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,  
Dropt, a flower.

### III.

#### GONE !

GONE !  
Gone till the end of the year,  
Gone, and the light gone with her and  
left me in shadow here !

Gone — flitted away,  
 Taken the stars from the night and the  
 sun from the day !  
 Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a  
 storm in the air !  
 Flown to the east or the west, flitted I  
 know not where !  
 Down in the south is a flash and a groan :  
 she is there ! she is there !

## IV.

## WINTER.

THE frost is here,  
 And fuel is dear,  
 And woods are sear,  
 And fires burn clear,  
 And frost is here  
 And has bitten the heel of the going year.

Bite, frost, bite !  
 You roll up away from the light  
 The blue woodlouse, and the plump dor-  
 mouse,  
 And the bees are still'd, and the flies are  
 kill'd,  
 And you bite far into the heart of the  
 house,  
 But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite !  
 The woods are all the searer,  
 The fuel is all the dearer,  
 The fires are all the clearer,  
 My spring is all the nearer,  
 You have bitten into the heart of the  
 earth,  
 But not into mine.

## v.

## SPRING.

BIRDS' love and birds' song  
 Flying here and there,  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 And you with gold for hair !  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 Passing with the weather,  
 Men's song and men's love,  
 To love once and forever.

Men's love and birds' love,  
 And women's love and men's !  
 And you my wren with a crown of gold,  
 You my Queen of the wrens !

You the Queen of the wrens —  
 We'll be birds of a feather,  
 I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,  
 And all in a nest together.

## VI.

## THE LETTER.

WHERE is another sweet as my sweet,  
 Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy ?  
 Fine little hands, fine little feet —

Dewy blue eye.  
 Shall I write to her ? shall I go ?  
 Ask her to marry me by and by ?  
 Somebody said that she'd say no ;  
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face ?  
 Ay or no, from shy of the shy ?  
 Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
 Fly !

Fly to the light in the valley below —  
 Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye :  
 Somebody said that she'd say no ;  
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

## VII.

## NO ANSWER.

THE mist and the rain, the mist and the  
 rain !

Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?  
 And never a glimpse of her window-pane !  
 And I may die but the grass will grow,  
 And the grass will grow when I am gone,  
 And the wet west wind and the world  
 will go on.

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,  
 No is trouble and cloud and storm,  
 Ay is life for a hundred years,  
 No will push me down to the worm,  
 And when I am there and dead and gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world will  
 go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the  
 wet !

Wet west wind, how you blow, you  
 blow !  
 And never a line from my lady yet !  
 Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?  
 Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world may  
 go on.

## VIII.

## NO ANSWER.

WINDS are loud and you are dumb :  
 Take my love, for love will come,  
 Love will come but once a life.  
 Winds are loud and winds will pass !  
 Spring is here with leaf and grass :  
 Take my love and be my wife.  
 After-loves of maids and men  
 Are but dainties drest again :  
 Love me now, you 'll love me then :  
 Love can love but once a life.

## IX.

## THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,  
 Claspt on her seal, my sweet !  
 Must I take you and break you,  
 Two little hands that meet ?  
 I must take you, and break you,  
 And loving hands must part —  
 Take, take — break, break —  
 Break — you may break my heart.  
 Faint heart never won —  
 Break, break, and all's done.

IX<sup>b</sup>.

## AY !

BE merry, all birds, to-day,  
 Be merry on earth as you never were  
 merry before,  
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far  
 away,  
 And merry forever and ever, and one  
 day more.

## Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

Look, look, how he flits,  
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,  
 from out of the pine !  
 Look how they tumble the blossom, the  
 mad little tits !  
 "Cuck-oo ! Cuck-oo !" was ever a  
 May so fine ?

## Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

O merry the linnet and dove,  
 And swallow and sparrow and thristle,  
 and have your desire !

O merry my heart, you have gotten the  
 wings of love,  
 And flit like the king of the wrens  
 with a crown of fire.  
 Why ?  
 For it's ay ay ay, ay ay.

## X.

## WHEN ?

SUN comes, moon comes,  
 Time slips away.  
 Sun sets, moon sets,  
 Love, fix a day.

"A year hence, a year hence."  
 "We shall both be gray."  
 "A month hence, a month hence."  
 "Far, far away."

"A week hence, a week hence."  
 "Ah, the long delay."  
 "Wait a little, wait a little,  
 You shall fix a day."

"To-morrow, love, to-morrow,  
 And that's an age away."  
 Blaze upon her window, sun,  
 And honor all the day.

## XI.

## MARRIAGE MORNING.

LIGHT, so low upon earth,  
 You send a flash to the sun.  
 Here is the golden close of love,  
 All my wooing is done.  
 O the woods and the meadows,  
 Woods where we hid from the wet,  
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,  
 Meadows in which we met !  
 Light, so low in the vale,  
 You flash and lighten afar :  
 For this is the golden morning of love,  
 And you are his morning star.  
 Flash, I am coming, I come,  
 By meadow and stile and wood :  
 O lighten into my eyes and my heart,  
 Into my heart and my blood !  
 Heart, are you great enough  
 For a love that never tires ?  
 O heart, are you great enough for love ?  
 I have heard of thorns and briers.  
 Over the thorns and briers,  
 Over the meadows and stiles,  
 Over the world to the end of it  
 Flash for a million miles.



## THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his  
moods  
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table  
Round,  
At Camelot, high above the yellowing  
woods,  
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the Hall.  
And toward him from the Hall, with  
harp in hand,  
And from the crown thereof a carcanet  
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize  
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
Came Tristram, saying, "Why skip ye  
so, Sir Fool?"

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once  
Far down beneath a winding wall of rock  
Heard a child wail. A stump of oak  
half-dead,  
From roots like some black coil of carven  
snakes  
Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro'  
mid-air  
Bearing an eagle's nest : and thro' the tree  
Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the  
wind  
Pierced ever a child's cry : and crag and  
tree  
Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous  
nest,  
This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,  
And all unscar'd from beak or talon,  
brought  
A maiden babe ; which Arthur pitying  
took,  
Then gave it to his Queen to rear : the  
Queen  
But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms  
Received, and after loved it tenderly,  
And named it Nestling ; so forgot her-  
self  
A moment, and her cares ; till that young  
life  
Being smitten in mid-heaven with mortal  
cold  
Past from her ; and in time the carcanet  
Vext her with plaintive memories of the  
child :  
So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,  
"Take thou the jewels of this dead  
innocence,  
And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-  
prize."

To whom the King, "Peace to thine  
eagle-borne  
Dead nestling, and this honor after  
death,  
Following thy will ! but, O my Queen, I  
muse  
Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or  
zone,  
Those diamonds that I rescued from the  
tarn,  
And Lancelot won, methought, for thee  
to wear."

"Would rather ye had let them fall,"  
she cried,  
"Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as they  
were,  
A bitterness to me ! — ye look amazed,  
Not knowing they were lost as soon as  
given —  
Slid from my hands, when I was leaning  
out  
Above the river — that unhappy child  
Past in her barge : but rosier luck will go  
With these rich jewels, seeing that they  
came  
Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,  
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.  
Perchance — who knows ? — the purest  
of thy knights  
May win them for the purest of my maids."

She ended, and the cry of a great  
jousts  
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the  
ways  
From Camelot in among the faded fields  
To furthest towers ; and everywhere the  
knights  
Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud  
morn  
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd  
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his  
nose  
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one  
hand off,  
And one with shatter'd fingers dangling  
lame,  
A churl, to whom indignantly the King,  
"My churl, for whom Christ died,  
what evil beast

Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face ?  
or fiend ?

Man was it who marr'd Heaven's image  
in thee thus ?”

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of  
splinter'd teeth,

Yet strangers to the tongue, and with  
blunt stump

Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the  
maim'd churl,

“He took them and he drave them to  
his tower —

Some hold he was a table-knight of  
thine —

A hundred goodly ones—the Red Knight  
he —

Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red  
Knight

Brake in upon me and drave them to his  
tower ;

And when I call'd upon thy name as one  
That doest right by gentle and by churl,  
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would out-  
right have slain,

Save that he sware me to a message,  
saying —

‘Tell thou the King and all his liars,  
that I

Have founded my Round Table in the  
North,

And whatsoever his own knights have  
sworn

My knights have sworn the counter to  
it — and say

My tower is full of harlots, like his court,  
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess  
To be none other than themselves — and  
say

My knights are all adulterers like his own,  
But mine are truer, seeing they profess  
To be none other ; and say his hour is  
come,

The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw.”

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the senes-  
chal,

“Take thou my churl, and tend him  
curiously

Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be  
whole.

The heathen — but that ever-climbing  
wave,

Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,  
Hath lain for years at rest — and rene-  
gades,

Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion,  
whom

The wholesome realm is purged of other-  
where, —

Friends, thro' your manhood and your  
fidelity, — now

Make their last head like Satan in the  
North.

My younger knights, new-made, in whom  
your flower

Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,  
Move with me toward their quelling,

which achieved,  
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to  
shore.

But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place  
Enchain'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field ;

For wherefore shouldst thou care to  
mingle with it,

Only to yield my Queen her own again ?  
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent : is it  
well ?”

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, “It is  
well :

Yet better if the King abide, and leave  
The leading of his younger knights to me.

Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well.”

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd  
him,

And while they stood without the doors,  
the King

Turn'd to him saying, “Is it then so  
well ?

Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he  
Of whom was written, ‘a sound is in his  
ears’ —

The foot that loiters, bidden go, — the  
glance

That only seems half-loyal to command, —  
A manner somewhat fall'n from rever-  
ence —

Or have I dream'd the bearing of our  
knights

Tells of a manhood ever less and lower ?  
Or whence the fear lest this my realm,  
uprear'd,

By noble deeds at one with noble vows,  
From flat confusion and brute violences,  
Reel back into the beast, and be no  
more ?”

He spoke, and taking all his younger  
knights,

Down the slope city rode, and sharply  
turn'd

North by the gate. In her high bower  
 the Queen,  
 Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,  
 Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not  
 that she sigh'd.  
 Then ran across her memory the strange  
 rhyme  
 Of bygone Merlin, "Where is he who  
 knows?  
 From the great deep to the great deep  
 he goes."

But when the morning of a tournament,  
 By these in earnest, those in mockery,  
 call'd  
 The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,  
 Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,  
 Round whose sick head all night, like  
 birds of prey,  
 The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,  
 And down a streetway hung with folds  
 of pure  
 White samite, and by fountains running  
 wine,  
 Where children sat in white with cups  
 of gold,  
 Moved to the lists, and there, with slow  
 sad steps  
 Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd  
 chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,  
 Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their  
 Queen  
 White-robed in honor of the stainless  
 child,  
 And some with scatter'd jewels, like a  
 bank  
 Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of  
 fire.  
 He lookt but once, and veil'd his eyes  
 again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a  
 dream  
 To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll  
 Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts  
 began :  
 And ever the wind blew, and yellowing  
 leaf  
 And gloom and gleam, and shower and  
 shorn plume  
 Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as one  
 Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,  
 When all the goodlier guests are past  
 away,

Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the  
 lists.  
 He saw the laws that ruled the tournament  
 Broken, but spake not ; once, a knight  
 cast down  
 Before his throne of arbitration cursed  
 The dead babe and the follies of the King ;  
 And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,  
 And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,  
 Modred, a narrow face : anon he heard  
 The voice that billow'd round the bar-  
 riers roar  
 An ocean-sounding welcome to one  
 knight,  
 But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,  
 And armor'd all in forest green, whereon  
 There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
 And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,  
 With ever-scattering berries, and on  
 shield  
 A spear, a harp, a bugle — Tristram —  
 late  
 From overseas in Brittany return'd,  
 And marriage with a princess of that  
 realm,  
 Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the  
 Woods —  
 Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime  
 with pain  
 His own against him, and now yearn'd  
 to shake  
 The burthen off his heart in one full shock  
 With Tristram ev'n to death : his strong  
 hands gript  
 And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,  
 Until he groan'd for wrath — so many  
 of those,  
 That ware their ladies' colors on the  
 casque,  
 Drew from before Sir Tristram to the  
 bounds,  
 And there with gibes and flickering  
 mockeries  
 Stood, while he mutter'd, "Craven  
 crests ! O shame !  
 What faith have these in whom they  
 swear to love ?  
 The glory of our Round Table is no more."

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave,  
 the gems,  
 Not speaking other word than "Hast  
 thou won ?  
 Art thou the purest, brother ? See, the  
 hand  
 Wherewith thou takest this is red !" to  
 whom

Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's  
 languorous mood,  
 Made answer, "Ay, but wherefore toss  
 me this  
 Like a dry bone cast to some hungry  
 hound ?  
 Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength  
 of heart  
 And might of limb, but mainly use and  
 skill,  
 Are winners in this pastime of our King.  
 My hand — belike the lance hath dript  
 upon it —  
 No blood of mine, I trow ; but O chief  
 knight,  
 Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,  
 Great brother, thou nor I have made the  
 world ;  
 Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine."

And Tristram round the gallery made  
 his horse  
 Caracole ; then bow'd his homage, bluntly  
 saying,  
 "Fair damsels, each to him who worships  
 each  
 Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold  
 This day my Queen of Beauty is not  
 here."  
 Then most of these were mute, some  
 anger'd, one  
 Murmuring "All courtesy is dead," and  
 one,  
 "The glory of our Round Table is no  
 more."

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt  
 and mantle clung,  
 And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day  
 Went glooming down in wet and weariness :  
 But under her black brows a swarthy  
 dame  
 Laught shrilly, crying "Praise the patient  
 saints,  
 Our one white day of Innocence hath  
 past,  
 Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt.  
 So be it.  
 The snowdrop only, flow'ring thro' the  
 year,  
 Would make the world as blank as  
 wintertide.  
 Come — let us comfort their sad eyes,  
 our Queen's  
 And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity  
 With all the kindlier colors of the field."

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the  
 feast  
 Variously gay : for he that tells the tale  
 Liken'd them, saying "as when an hour  
 of cold  
 Falls on the mountain in midsummer  
 snows,  
 And all the purple slopes of mountain  
 flowers  
 Pass under white, till the warm hour  
 returns  
 With veer of wind, and all are flowers  
 again" ;  
 So dame and damsel cast the simple white,  
 And glowing in all colors, the live grass,  
 Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy,  
 glanced  
 About the revels, and with mirth so loud  
 Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the  
 Queen,  
 And wroth at Tristram and the lawless  
 jousts,  
 Brake up their sports, then slowly to her  
 bower  
 Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow  
 morn,  
 High over all the yellowing Autumn-tide,  
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the  
 hall.  
 Then Tristram saying, "Why skip ye  
 so, Sir Fool ?"  
 Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet  
 replied,  
 "Belike for lack of wiser company ;  
 Or being fool, and seeing too much wit  
 Makes the world rotten, why, belike I  
 skip  
 To know myself the wisest knight of all."  
 "Ay, fool," said Tristram, "but 't is  
 eating dry  
 To dance without a catch, a roundelay  
 To dance to." Then he twangled on  
 his harp,  
 And while he twangled little Dagonet  
 stood,  
 Quiet as any water-sodden log  
 Stay'd in the wandering warble of a  
 brook ;  
 But when the twangling ended, skipt  
 again ;  
 Then being ask'd, "Why skipt ye not,  
 Sir Fool ?"  
 Made answer, "I had liefer twenty years  
 Skip to the broken music of my brains  
 Than any broken music ye can make."



Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to come,

“Good now, what music have I broken, fool?”

And little Dagonet, skipping, “Arthur, the king’s;

For when thou playest that air with Queen Isolt,

Thou makest broken music with thy bride,  
Her daintier namesake down in Brit-  
tany —

And so thou breakest Arthur’s music too.”

“Save for that broken music in thy brains,  
Sir Fool,” said Tristram, “I would break  
thy head.

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were  
o’er,

The life had flown, we sware but by the  
shell —

I am but a fool to reason with a fool.

Come, thou art crabbed and sour : but  
lean me down,

Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses’ ears,  
And hearken if my music be not true.

“Free love — free field — we love  
but while we may :

The woods are hush’d, their music is no  
more :

The leaf is dead, the yearning past away :  
New leaf, new life — the days of frost  
are o’er :

New life new love to suit the newer day :  
New loves are sweet as those that went  
before :

Free love — free field — we love but  
while we may.’

“Ye might have moved slow-measure  
to my tune,

Not stood stockstill. I made it in the  
woods,

And found it ring as true as tested gold.”

But Dagonet with one foot poised in  
his hand,

“Friend, did ye mark that fountain yes-  
terday

Made to run wine ? — but this had run  
itself

All out like a long life to a sour end —  
And them that round it sat with golden  
cups

To hand the wine to whomsoever came —  
The twelve small damosels white as In-  
nocence,

In honor of poor Innocence the babe,

Who left the gems which Innocence the  
Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the King  
Gave for a prize — and one of those  
white slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,  
‘Drink, drink, Sir Fool,’ and thereupon

I drank,  
Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the  
draught was mud.”

And Tristram, “Was it muddier than  
thy gibes?

Is all the laughter gone dead out of  
thee ? —

Not marking how the knighthood mock  
thee, fool —

‘Fear God : honor the king — his one  
true knight —

Sole follower of the vows’ — for here be  
they

Who knew thee swine enow before I came,  
Smuttier than blasted grain : but when  
the King

Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up  
It frightened all free fool from out thy  
heart ;

Which left thee less than fool, and less  
than swine,

A naked aught — yet swine I hold thee  
still,

For I have flung thee pearls, and find  
thee swine.”

And little Dagonet mincing with his  
feet,

“Knight, an ye fling those rubies round  
my neck

In lieu of hers, I’ll hold thou hast some  
touch

Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.  
Swine ? I have wallow’d, I have wash’d  
— the world

Is flesh and shadow — I have had my day.  
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind  
Hath foul’d me — an I wallow’d, then  
I wash’d —

I have had my day and my philosophies —  
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur’s  
fool.

Swine, say ye ? swine, goats, asses, rams,  
and geese

Troop’d round a Paynim harper once,  
who thrumm’d

On such a wire as musically as thou  
Some such fine song — but never a king’s  
fool.”

And Tristram, "Then were swine,  
goats, asses, geese  
The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard  
Had such a mastery of his mystery  
That he could harp his wife up out of Hell."

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of  
his foot,  
"And whither harp'st thou thine ? down !  
and thyself  
Down ! and two more : a helpful harper  
thou,  
That harpest downward ! Dost thou  
know the star  
We call the harp of Arthur up in heav-  
en ?"

And Tristram, "Ay, Sir Fool, for  
when our King  
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the  
knights,  
Glorying in each new glory, set his name  
High on all hills, and in the signs of  
heaven."

And Dagonet answer'd, "Ay, and  
when the land  
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set  
yourself  
To babble about him, all to show your  
wit —  
And whether he were king by courtesy,  
Or king by right — and so went harping  
down  
The black king's highway, got so far,  
and grew  
So witty, that ye play'd at ducks and  
drakes  
With Arthur's vows on the great lake of  
fire.  
Tuwhoo ! do ye see it ? do ye see the  
star ?"

"Nay, fool," said Tristram, "not in  
open day."  
And Dagonet, "Nay, nor will : I see it  
and hear.  
It makes a silent music up in heaven,  
And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,  
And then we skip." "Lo, fool," he  
said, "ye talk  
Fool's treason : is the king thy brother  
fool ?"

Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and  
shrill'd,  
"Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king  
of fools !  
Conceits himself as God that he can make

Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles,  
milk  
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-  
combs,  
And men from beasts. Long live the  
king of fools !"

And down the city Dagonet danced  
away.

But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues  
And solitary passes of the wood  
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the  
west.

Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt  
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore  
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood  
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye  
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perched,  
or flew.

Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,  
Unruffling waters re-collect the shape  
Of one that in them sees himself, return'd ;  
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,  
Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn  
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode.  
At length

A lodge of intertwisted beechen-boughs  
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft, the  
which himself

Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt  
Against a shower, dark in the golden  
grove

Appearing, sent his fancy back to where  
She lived a moon in that low lodge with  
him :

Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish  
king,

With six or seven, when Tristram was  
away,

And snatch'd her thence ; yet dreading  
worse than shame

Her warrior Tristram, spake not any  
word,

But bode his hour, devising wretched-  
ness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram  
lookt

So sweet, that, halting, in he past, and  
sank

Down on a drift of foliage random-blown ;  
But could not rest for musing how to  
smooth

And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.  
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all

The tonguesters of the court she had not heard.

But then what folly had sent him overseas  
After she left him lonely here ? a name ?  
Was it the name of one in Brittany,  
Isolt, the daughter of the King ? " Isolt  
Of the white hands " they call'd her : the  
sweet name

Allured him first, and then the maid  
herself,

Who served him well with those white  
hands of hers,

And loved him well, until himself had  
thought

He loved her also, wedded easily,  
But left her all as easily, and return'd.

The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes  
Had drawn him home — what marvel ?  
then he laid

His brows upon the drifted leaf and  
dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany  
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,  
And show'd them both the ruby-chain,  
and both

Began to struggle for it, till his Queen  
Graspt it so hard, that all her hand was  
red.

Then cried the Breton, " Look, her hand  
is red !

These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,  
And melts within her hand — her hand  
is hot

With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,  
Is all as cool and white as any flower."  
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings and then  
A whimpering of the spirit of the child,  
Because the twain had spoil'd her carcanet.

He dream'd ; but Arthur with a hun-  
dred spears

Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,  
And many a glancing plash and sallowy  
isle,

The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty  
marsh

Glared on a huge machicolated tower  
That stood with open doors, whereout  
was roll'd

A roar of riot, as from men secure  
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease  
Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.  
" Lo there," said one of Arthur's youth,  
for there,

High on a grim dead tree before the tower,  
A goodly brother of The Table Round

Swung by the neck : and on the boughs  
a shield

Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,  
And therebeside a horn, inflamed the  
knights

At that dishonor done the gilded spur,  
Till each would clash the shield, and  
blow the horn.

But Arthur waved them back : alone he  
rode.

Then at the dry harsh roar of the great  
horn,

That sent the face of all the marsh aloft  
An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud  
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight  
heard, and all,

Even to tipmost lance and topmost helm,  
In blood-red armor sallying, howl'd to  
the King,

" The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash  
thee flat ! —

Lo ! art thou not that eunuch-hearted  
King

Who fain had clipt free manhood from  
the world —

The woman-worshipper ? Yea, God's  
curse, and I !

Slain was the brother of my paramour  
By a knight of thine, and I that heard  
her whine

And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,  
Sware by the scorpion-worm that twists  
in hell,

And stings itself to everlasting death,  
To hang whatever knight of thine I fought  
And tumbled. Art thou King ? — Look  
to thy life ! "

He ended : Arthur knew the voice ;  
the face

Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the  
name

Went wandering somewhere darkling in  
his mind.

And Arthur deign'd not use of word or  
sword,

But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd  
from horse

To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,  
Down from the causeway heavily to the  
swamp

Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching  
wave

Heard in dead night along that table-  
shore

Drops flat, and after the great waters  
break

Whitening for half a league, and thin  
 themselves  
 Far over sands marbled with moon and  
 cloud,  
 From less and less to nothing; thus he fell  
 Head-heavy, while the knights, who  
 watch'd him, roar'd  
 And shouted and leapt down upon the  
 fall'n;  
 There trampled out his face from being  
 known,  
 And sank his head in mire, and slimed  
 themselves:  
 Nor heard the King for their own cries,  
 but sprang  
 Thro' open doors, and swording right  
 and left  
 Men, women, on their sodden faces, hurl'd  
 The tables over and the wines, and slew  
 Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,  
 And all the pavement stream'd with  
 massacre:  
 Then, yell with yell echoing, they fired  
 the tower,  
 Which half that autumn night, like the  
 live North,  
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,  
 Made all above it, and a hundred meres  
 About it, as the water Moab saw  
 Come round by the East, and out beyond  
 them flush'd  
 The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore  
 to shore,  
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.  
 Then out of Tristram waking the red  
 dream  
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge  
 return'd,  
 Mid-forest, and the wind among the  
 boughs.  
 He whistled his good warhorse left to graze  
 Among the forest greens, vaulted upon  
 him,  
 And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,  
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a cross,  
 Stay'd him, "Why weep ye?" "Lord,"  
 she said, "my man  
 Hath left me or is dead"; whereon he  
 thought—  
 "What an she hate me now? I would  
 not this.  
 What an she love me still? I would not  
 that.  
 I know not what I would"—but said  
 to her, —

"Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate  
 return,  
 He find thy favor changed and love thee  
 not" —  
 Then pressing day by day thro' Lyonesse  
 Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard  
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly  
 hounds  
 Yelp at his heart, but, turning, past and  
 gain'd  
 Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,  
 A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,  
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair  
 And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the  
 Queen.  
 And when she heard the feet of Tristram  
 grind  
 The spiring stone that scaled about her  
 tower,  
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors,  
 and there  
 Belted his body with her white embrace,  
 Crying aloud, "Not Mark — not Mark,  
 my soul!  
 The footstep flutter'd me at first: not he:  
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my  
 Mark,  
 But warrior-wise thou stridest through his  
 halls  
 Who hates thee, as I him — ev'n to the  
 death.  
 My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark  
 Quicken within me, and knew that thou  
 wert nigh."  
 To whom Sir Tristram smiling, "I am  
 here.  
 Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine."

And drawing somewhat backward she  
 replied,  
 "Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his  
 own,  
 But save for dread of thee had beaten  
 me,  
 Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me  
 somehow — Mark?  
 What rights are his that dare not strike  
 for them?  
 Not lift a hand — not, tho' he found me  
 thus!  
 But hearken, have ye met him? hence he  
 went  
 To-day for three days' hunting — as he  
 said —  
 And so returns belike within an hour.



Mark's way, my soul! — but eat not thou  
 with him,  
 Because he hates thee even more than fears;  
 Nor drink : and when thou passest any  
 wood  
 Close visor, lest an arrow from the bush  
 Should leave me all alone with Mark and  
 hell.  
 My God, the measure of my hate for Mark  
 Is as the measure of my love for thee."

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one  
 by love,  
 Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and  
 spake  
 To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,  
 "O hunter, and O blower of the horn,  
 Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,  
 For, ere I mated with my shambling king,  
 Ye twain had fallen out about the bride  
 Of one — his name is out of me — the prize,  
 If prize she were — (what marvel — she  
 could see) —  
 Thine, friend ; and ever since my craven  
 seeks  
 To wreck thee villanously : but, O Sir  
 Knight,  
 What dame or damsel have ye kneeled  
 to last ?"

And Tristram, "Last to my Queen  
 Paramount,  
 Here now to my Queen Paramount of love,  
 And loveliness, ay, lovelier than when  
 first  
 Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,  
 Sailing from Ireland."

Softly laugh'd Isolt,  
 "Flatter me not, for hath not our great  
 Queen  
 My dole of beauty trebled?" and he said,  
 "Her beauty is her beauty, and thine  
 thine,  
 And thine is more to me — soft, gracious,  
 kind —  
 Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips  
 Most gracious ; but she, haughty, ev'n to  
 him,  
 Lancelot ; for I have seen him wan enow  
 To make one doubt if ever the great  
 Queen  
 Have yielded him her love."

To whom Isolt,  
 "Ah then, false hunter and false harper,  
 thou

Who brakest thro' the scruple of my  
 bond,  
 Calling me thy white hind, and saying to  
 me  
 That Guinevere had sinned against the  
 highest,  
 And I — misyoked with such a want of  
 man —  
 That I could hardly sin against the low-  
 est."

He answered, "O my soul, be com-  
 comforted !  
 If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,  
 If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,  
 Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning  
 sin  
 That made us happy : but how ye greet  
 me — fear  
 And fault and doubt — no word of that  
 fond tale —  
 Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet  
 memories  
 Of Tristram in that year he was away."

And, saddening on the sudden, spake  
 Isolt,  
 "I had forgotten all in my strong joy  
 To see thee — yearnings ? — ay ! for, hour  
 by hour,  
 Here in the never-ended afternoon,  
 O sweeter than all memories of thee,  
 Deeper than any yearnings after thee  
 Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smil-  
 ing seas,  
 Watched from this tower. Isolt of Britain  
 dash'd  
 Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,  
 Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss ?  
 Wedded her ?  
 Fought in her father's battles ? wounded  
 there ?  
 The King was all fulfill'd with grateful-  
 ness,  
 And she, my namesake of the hands,  
 that heal'd  
 Thy hurt and heart with unguent and  
 caress —  
 Well — can I wish her any huger wrong  
 Than having known thee ? her too hast  
 thou left  
 To pine and waste in those sweet memo-  
 ries ?  
 O were I not my Mark's, by whom all  
 men  
 Are noble, I should hate thee more than  
 love."

And Tristram, fondling her light hands, replied,  
 "Grace, Queen, for being loved : she loved me well.  
 Did I love her? the name at least I loved.  
 Isolt? — I fought his battles, for Isolt !  
 The night was dark ; the true star set.  
 Isolt !  
 The name was ruler of the dark — Isolt?  
 Care not for her ! patient, and prayerful,  
 meek,  
 Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God."

And Isolt answer'd, "Yea, and why not I?  
 Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,  
 Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee now.  
 Here one black, mute midsummer night I sat  
 Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering where,  
 Murmuring a light song I had heard thee sing,  
 And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.  
 Then flash'd a levin-brand ; and near me stood,  
 In fuming sulphur blue and green, a fiend —  
 Mark's way to steal behind one in the dark —  
 For there was Mark : 'He has wedded her,' he said,  
 Not said, but hissed it : then this crown of towers  
 So shook to such a roar of all the sky,  
 That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,  
 And woke again in utter dark, and cried,  
 'I will flee hence and give myself to God' —  
 And thou wert lying in thy new leman's arms."

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her hand,  
 "May God be with thee, sweet, when old and gray,  
 And past desire !" a saying that anger'd her.  
 "May God be with thee, sweet, when thou art old,  
 And sweet no more to me !' I need Him now.  
 For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so gross

Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the mast?

The greater man, the greater courtesy.  
 But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild beasts —

Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a lance

Becomes thee well — art grown wild beast thyself.

How darest thou, if lover, push me even  
 In fancy from thy side, and set me far  
 In the gray distance, half a life away,  
 Her to be loved no more ? Unsay it, unswear !

Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,  
 Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,

Thy marriage and mine own, that I should suck

Lies like sweet wines : lie to me : I believe.  
 Will ye not lie ? not swear, as there ye kneel,

And solemnly as when ye swear to him,  
 The man of men, our King — My God, the power

Was once in vows when men believed the King !

They lied not then, who swear, and thro' their vows

The King prevailing made his realm : — I say,

Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n when old,

Gray-haired, and past desire, and in despair."

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and down,

"Vows ! did ye keep the vow ye made to Mark

More than I mine ? Lied, say ye ? Nay, but learnt,

The vow that binds too strictly snaps itself —

My knighthood taught me this — ay, being snapt —

We run more counter to the soul thereof Than had we never sworn. I swear no more.

I swore to the great King, and am forsworn.

For once — ev'n to the height — I honour'd him.

'Man, is he man at all ?' methought, when first

I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and beheld

That victor of the Pagan throned in  
hall —

His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow  
Like hillsnow high in heaven, the steel-  
blue eyes,

The golden beard that clothed his lips  
with light —

Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,  
With Merlin's mystic babble about his  
end,

Amazed me; then, his foot was on a stool  
Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me no  
man,

But Michaël trampling Satan; so I swear,  
Being amazed: but this went by — the  
vows!

O ay — the wholesome madness of an  
hour —

They served their use, their time; for  
every knight

Believed himself a greater than himself,  
And every follower eyed him as a God;  
Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,  
Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he had  
done,

And so the realm was made; but then  
their vows —

First mainly thro' that sullyng of our  
Queen —

Began to gall the knighthood, asking  
whence

Had Arthur right to bind them to him-  
self?

Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up  
from out the deep?

They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh  
and blood

Of our old Kings: whence then? a  
doubtful lord

To bind them by inviolable vows,  
Which flesh and blood perforce would  
violate:

For feel this arm of mine — the tide  
within

Red with free chase and heather-scented  
air,

Pulsing full man; can Arthur make me  
pure

As any maiden child? lock up my tongue  
From uttering freely what I freely hear?  
Bind me to one? The great world laughs  
at it.

And worldling of the world am I, and  
know

The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour  
Wooes his own end; we are not angels  
here

Nor shall be: vows — I am woodman of  
the woods,

And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale  
Mock them: my soul, we love but while  
we may;

And therefore is my love so large for thee,  
Seeing it is not bounded save by love."

Here ending, he moved toward her,  
and she said,

"Good: an I turn'd away my love for thee  
To some one thrice as courteous as thy-  
self —

For courtesy wins woman all as well  
As valor may — but he that closes both  
Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller indeed,  
Rosier, and comelier, thou — but say I  
loved

This knightliest of all knights, and cast  
thee back

Thine own small saw 'We love but while  
we may,'

Well then, what answer?"

He that while she spake,  
Mindful of what he brought to adorn her  
with,

The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch  
The warm white apple of her throat, re-  
plied,

"Press this a little closer, sweet, until —  
Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd —  
meat,

Wine, wine — and I will love thee to the  
death,

And out beyond into the dream to come."

So then, when both were brought to  
full accord,

She rose, and set before him all he will'd;  
And after these had comforted the blood  
With meats and wines, and satiated their  
hearts —

Now talking of their woodland paradise,  
The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts,  
the lawns;

Now mocking at the much ungainliness,  
And craven shifts, and long crane legs  
of Mark —

Then Tristram laughing caught the harp,  
and sang:

"Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bend the  
brier!

A star in heaven, a star within the mere!  
Ay, ay, O ay — a star was my desire,  
And one was far apart, and one was near:

Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bow the  
grass !

And one was water and one star was fire,  
And one will ever shine and one will pass.

Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that move the  
mere."

Then in the light's last glimmer Tris-  
tram show'd

And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,  
"The collar of some order, which our King  
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,  
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy  
peers."

"Not so, my Queen," he said, "but  
the red fruit

Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,  
And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,  
And hither brought by Tristram for his  
last

Love-offering and peace-offering unto  
thee."

He rose, he turn'd, and flinging round  
her neck,

Claspt it ; but while he bow'd himself to  
lay

Warm kisses in the hollow of her  
throat,

Out of the dark, just as the lips had  
touch'd,

Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek —

"Mark's way," said Mark, and clove him  
thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and  
while he climb'd,

All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping  
gloom,

The stairway to the hall, and look'd and  
saw

The great Queen's bower was dark, —  
about his feet

A voice clung sobbing till he question'd  
it,

"What art thou ?" and the voice about  
his feet

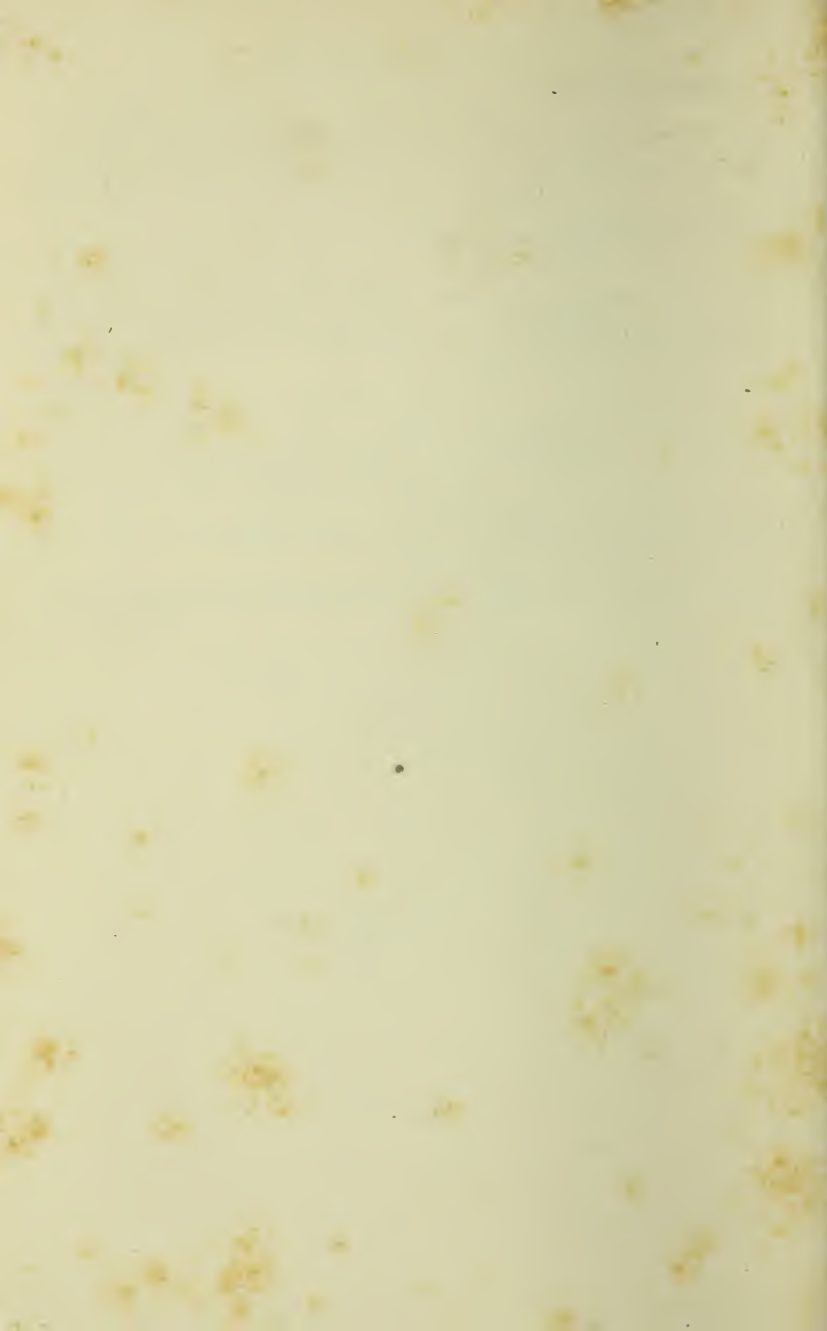
Sent up an answer, sobbing, "I am thy  
fool,

And I shall never make thee smile  
again."

THE END.

















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